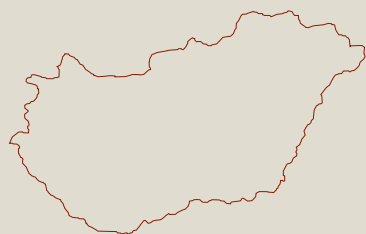


*Report*

# Education in Hungary 2000



National Institute of Public Education

# **Education in Hungary 2000**



National Institute of Public Education (OKI)  
Budapest, 2001

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**Socrates**



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## Foreword

This is the fourth occasion on which the National Institute of Public Education, assisted by the Ministry of Education, has prepared and published its Report on Education in Hungary. The intention of this study is to analyse and evaluate the current state of affairs and ongoing trends in Hungarian public education. As on previous occasions, an abridged English version of the Report is also being published, which forms the present volume.

The idea of producing a comprehensive report on the changes in public education at intervals of every 2 or 3 years was originally conceived in the mid-1990s, following the OECD report on Hungarian education policy. The concept was motivated in part by background analyses relating to the OECD report and their influence on debates concerning education, and in part by OECD recommendations. Hungarian public education administration officials came to the conclusion that such a thorough professional analysis, based on statistical data, research results and documents, could have several positive effects. Firstly, it may have a favourable influence on general opinion concerning public education by approaching problems in a systematic, thematic and professional manner, thereby making trends in education policy more predictable and more rational. Secondly, by analysing the system and providing feedback, it may have a favourable influence on the quality and efficiency of education. Thirdly, by documenting events in educational policy-making it aids continuity and helps to maintain a balance between change and stability in an age characterised by rapid changes and unstable periods of transition.

The Report published in 2000, which now appears in an abridged English version, differs from previous reports in that it attempts to provide an overview of trends over the 1990s, rather than looking only at a few years. The emphasis, however, is on the description and analysis of changes that have taken place since the publication of the last such report in 1996, but this time they are presented in the context of the still ongoing socio-economic changes that began in 1989.

It is not an exaggeration to say that changes in Hungary in the 1990s took place on a historical scale. Responsibilities for the maintenance of educational institutions were given to politically autonomous local communities, with rights to control education in many ways. A number of private and church-affiliated schools were established, and new forums emerged. In certain areas of public education (primarily in secondary schools) considerable growth was observed, whilst vocational training greatly diminished. A significant proportion of institutions have gone through a transformation in character and many schools have introduced years of teaching extending before and after their former operational period. This has altered the demarcation lines between primary, secondary and higher education, vertical divisions in the school system, and student flows – a change unprecedented in previous decades.

Regulations concerning the content of the curriculum have been transformed in a unique way, unparalleled in East-Central Europe. The early 1990s saw the abolition of mandatory, detailed central curricula and new national documents were prepared to define the requirements concerning the essential content of education. Schools were obliged to create documents

to regulate their own pedagogical work. Local autonomy and professional responsibility put teachers in a new position and inevitably redefined the function of schools and the role of teachers. An extraordinary transformation took place in institutions supporting the work of schools and instructors, and new forms of service emerged. Whilst the financial conditions in which public education operated deteriorated dramatically due to the economic crisis in the early 1990s, resources for development were by the end of the decade being provided to an unprecedented degree. Simultaneously, new mechanisms were being created to distribute these resources, providing access to all types of forums for professional development. As a result, a previously unimaginable number of innovative initiatives took place.

The social, political and economic transformation taking place in East-Central Europe resulted in a considerable transformation of educational systems in these countries. Changes, however, were probably nowhere as far-reaching as in Hungary. In few countries did trends such as growing local autonomy, an opening up of the educational system, market-like processes and competition between institutions, the intensification of professional activity amongst teachers, and the multi-faceted active role of the state as a developer have such significance. All this makes trends in Hungarian education particularly interesting, both for Hungarian and international analysts. The presentation of these trends is facilitated by the great number of research programmes taking place in Hungary during the 1990s, which contributed to the uncovering of processes at local and institutional level. This present Report certainly has its limits. Those who need more information should refer to the homepage of the Ministry of Education, or that of the National Institute of Public Education ([www.om.hu](http://www.om.hu) and [www.oki.hu](http://www.oki.hu), respectively), and the links therein, to find documents available in English.

This Report devotes individual chapters to issues such as the key features of the socio-economic environment of education; the problems of public education administration and funding; the structural problems of the system; the issue of student flows; changes in the content of teaching, curriculum policy and conditions within schools; working conditions for teachers; the efficiency and quality of education; and finally inequalities within education and problems concerning the education of minorities and students with special needs. The English version of the Report has been supplemented with some extra context and background information that is not necessary for Hungarians but may prove to be useful in orienting the international reader attempting to understand the processes taking place in Hungary.

We must emphasise that this Report – like those previously issued – focuses on issues of primary and secondary education. Higher education and adult education are mentioned insofar as they have some relevance to primary and secondary education. We must also point out that this Report was prepared by a research team and as such – governmental financial support notwithstanding – the observations within are not expressions of official views and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of national authorities.



# Chapter 1

## **The Socio-economic Environment of Education**

### **1.1 THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE**

Hungary is located in East Central Europe. Its neighbours are Austria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. Two-thirds of its territory are flatlands, below 200 meters of elevation. Ninety percent of its water resources come from outside the country, the two main rivers being the Danube and the Tisza. The largest lake of Central Europe, the Balaton, can also be found here. Hungary is a relatively small country, the population and the size of the country are very similar to those of Portugal or Austria. 10.2 million people (1.5% of the population of Europe) live on 93 030 km<sup>2</sup> (0.9% of the territory of Europe). The population of Hungary has been decreasing since the 1980s. The density of population is on average 110 people per square kilometre. Urbanisation is accelerating: 62.2% of the population live in 196 towns (1994 data) and almost one-third of town-dwellers live in Budapest. The capital is a city of 2.1 million inhabitants. Ninety-six per cent of the population are Hungarian, the largest minorities in Hungary being Gypsies, Germans, Croats, Slovaks and Romanians.

Hungary is a parliamentary democracy with a multiparty government system. After the communist era, the first freely elected government in 1990 was a coalition of parties characterised by a Christian Democratic spirit. In 1994, the Hungarian Socialist Party obtained the majority of votes and formed a coalition government with the largest liberal party in Hungary, the Alliance of Free Democrats. After the elections of 1998 a centre-right wing government was formed by the Fidesz – the Hungarian Civic Party. Hungary is a republic. Officially speaking, the head of state is the President of the Republic who is elected by the Parliament. In effect, he possesses little political power. Real executive power is exercised by the Prime Minister, who is always nominated by the most powerful party in the Parliament. The Constitutional Court, established in 1990, also retains relatively great influence in political life.

The system of public administration is fairly decentralised. The elected bodies of local municipalities of villages and towns enjoy considerable political and financial independence. The country is divided into 19 counties and Budapest, the capital. There are locally and directly elected governing bodies at county level, but they hardly have any disposition over major resources, their importance and responsibilities being reduced since the change of regime in 1990.

### **1.2 THE MAJOR FACTORS DETERMINING CHANGES IN THE 1990s**

Changes in the Hungarian public education in the 1990s can essentially be linked to two factors; on one hand, to the changing global and external political and socio-economical environment and to changes within the educational system on the other.

## *Challenges within Hungary*

Similarly to other countries in the East-Central European region, Hungary experienced dramatic changes in the political and socio-economic environment of public education. The most traumatic phase of these changes had taken place by end of the 1990s.

The economic transformation was paralleled by social changes on a similar scale: a part of the society became well-to-do capital owners, while other groups found themselves in a disadvantaged position. The gap between rich and poor regions and communities has increased. The number of inactive people driven out of the labour market has multiplied and social integration has become more difficult for certain minority groups, primarily Gypsies. Social changes incorporate the fact that knowledge and high qualifications are valued more highly by the labour market, the ongoing cultural transformation, a pluralisation of values and an increase in forms of deviant behaviour. An especially significant area is demography. The current major and long-term demographic decrease will have an effect on potential future trends in public education in the next 10-20 years.

Socio-economic changes were accompanied by the total transformation of the political system and the structure of administration. Particularly significant elements include democratic and constitutional structures, the emergence of Hungary's characteristic multi-party system, an increase in the power of elected bodies at the expense of career officials, the emergence of autonomous local governments and an overall consolidation of civil society. By the end of the decade it has become clear that certain problems of public education cannot be handled within the prevailing administration that was formed at the beginning of the decade.

## *Global Challenges*

Hungary is more and more exposed to the challenges and changes that Europe and the developed world has to face at present, especially to the transformational process known as globalisation, which includes previously unknown forms of fierce economic competition. This has an effect on expectations towards public education.

Direct challenges for education are trends threatening social integration and cohesion, such as long-term unemployment, an increased polarisation of society, an increase in the proportion of peripheral social groups, an increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, conflicts between different cultures and the emergence of media and electronic communication as a determining factor in culture. Traditional school culture and the traditional forms of social regulations at schools have their limits in counteracting the negative effects and consequences of these trends.

As a result, the government's concept of education has changed radically, a key element being lifelong learning, which induces a major change in the tools of educational policy. The revolutionary development of information and communication technology (ICT) poses quite a challenge. It opens up a new dimension for education but at the same time it threatens traditional institutional structures.

The 1990s have seen spectacular results in the opening up of education. For Hungary the milestones were system-building development programmes through World Bank loans, membership and evaluation surveys in the OECD, as well as participation in educational programmes of the European Union.

### 1.3 CHANGES IN REGULATIONS

Between 1990 and 1999 there were five new laws or major amendments affecting public education. Following a minor amendment in 1990, the Acts of Parliament determining public education were passed in 1993 (Public Education Act, Vocational Education Act and Higher Education Act). These Acts essentially:

- guarantee basic rights of freedom
- consolidate the principle of shared responsibility and local autonomy
- have opened the way for a vertical transformation of the school system
- have extended the period of general education and postponed the beginning of vocational education (from 14 to 16 years of age)
- have improved the links of vocational education to the economy
- by replacing a former system of central regulation of teaching content, have introduced two-tiered regulation promoting local curricular independence.

The key document regulating the content of teaching, the National Core Curriculum, was passed in 1995. Amendments were passed in 1995 and 1996, improving the original 1993 Act with new elements (including new norms of local responsibilities, a more detailed regulation for evaluation and exams, the responsibilities of curriculum design on the county level and new rights for students). In 1997 the government accepted a new system of secondary school-leaving examination to be phased in gradually by 2004, in which the student is entitled to select the exam level (Ordinary or Advanced). The most recent amendment was passed in 1999, which – leaving the basic system untouched – included a number of changes. The amendment has increased the official responsibilities of the Minister of Education, introduced the concept of frame curriculum and provided a significant role for quality assurance.

Public education is affected by other new acts of Parliament as well. A most important one is the 1990 Local Governments Act, which has significantly transformed responsibilities within public education and resulted in one of the most decentralised educational systems in Europe. The frames of ideologically committed education have been defined (Freedom of Religion and Conscience Act, 1990), ownership relations have been modified (Act on Former Church Property, 1991), the status of teachers have changed (Public Employee Act, 1992) and the system of civil and minority rights concerning education have been altered (Minority Act, 1993).

Public education has been rather influenced by the State Budget Act (1992), the annual budget and – in reference to development and compensation for inequalities – the annual Acts on earmarked subsidies for local governments. In the second part of the nineties public education was also significantly influenced by the Child Protection Act (1997), the Non-profit Organisations Act (1997) and the Local Governments Association Act (1997).

# 1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

In the past decade the size of age groups have changed in a particularly rapid manner in Hungary, which meant a major problem for the optimal use of educational capacities. While in the early nineties large-sized age groups (particularly at secondary level) posed a problem, by the late nineties the problem became the too few number of children. Since 1993 the age groups have become smaller in primary education as well, and the birth rate has been decreasing ever since (Table 1.1 and Fig. 1.1).

While the number of registered live births was 123 000 in 1996, it was merely 94 000 in 1999. Experts forecast further decreases in all age groups in the next few years, which will limit the expansion of secondary and higher education.

*Table 1.1*  
*The size of age groups born between 1975 and 1999 on January 1st, 1999*

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1998  
\* Preliminary estimate

Year	Size
1975	189 092
1976	177 737
1977	170 587
1978	161 757
1979	154 379
1980	143 587
1981	137 942
1982	129 196
1983	122 981
1984	120 828
1985	126 135
1986	124 218
1987	122 930
1988	121 527
1989	120 784
1990	123 459
1991	124 968
1992	119 733
1993	115 405
1994	114 094
1995	110 695
1996	104 075
1997	99 308
1998	96 467
1999*	94 098

*Figure 1.1*  
*The size of age groups born between 1975 and 1999 on January 1st, 1999*



Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1998  
NB: Data for 1999 is a preliminary estimate

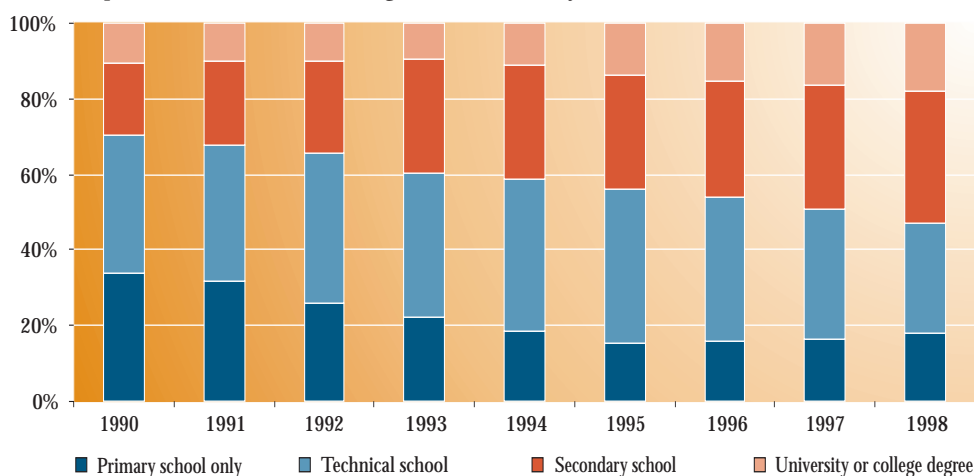
## Qualifications of the Population

The qualification levels of the Hungarian population has been constantly improving in the past decades, but a characteristic group of the population (approximately one-third) still has primary school qualifications only. The economically active population, on the other hand, shows a much better picture, four-fifths of them have higher than primary school qualifications.

As seen in Fig. 1.2 and Table 1.2, the number of those leaving the educational system shows that education responded to the appearance of larger age groups with a few years' delay. As a result, the proportion of school leavers with low qualifications have increased. Since the mid-1990s the proportion of those leaving the educational system with secondary or higher qualifications has improved significantly. By the end of the nineties, the proportion of the Hungarian population with secondary or higher qualifications is better than the European Union average. While in 1997 the 31% of the 20-29 age group has no secondary level education, the same figure in Hungary is 22% (Key data on Education in Europe (2000)).

*Figure 1.2*

*Highest school qualifications of those leaving the educational system, 1990-1998*



Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1990-1998

*Table 1.2*

*Highest school qualifications of those leaving the educational system, 1990-1998*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
University or college degree	10.6	10.1	9.9	9.3	11.0	13.8	15.3	16.3	17.8
Secondary school leaving exam total sum	18.8	22.2	24.3	30.3	30.4	30.3	30.9	32.2	35.3
General secondary school	4.9	7.5	7.6	9.4	9.3	11.3	11.7	11.7	12.0
Secondary vocational school	10.8	11.5	13.0	17.2	14.3	10.8	7.8	7.4	6.8
Post-secondary training	3.1	3.2	3.7	3.7	6.8	8.2	11.4	13.1	16.5
Vocational training school	33.9	33.1	36.5	33.3	33.6	33.5	32.2	30.8	25.8
Short vocational training school	2.8	2.9	3.2	5.1	6.4	7.2	5.5	4.4	3.0
Primary school	27.2	24.3	20.3	18.2	15.1	12.1	12.7	13.0	14.8
Primary education incomplete	6.6	7.4	5.8	3.8	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total sum (in thousands)	152.4	167.5	172.6	180.3	174.3	151.8	153.8	155.2	155.4
Percentage of qualified population	61.2	60.8	66.3	68.4	71.9	73.3	72.2	72.0	69.9
Percentage of unqualified population	38.8	39.2	33.7	31.6	28.1	26.7	27.8	28.0	30.1

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1990-1998

## Adult Literacy

International experiences show that a high level of school education does not necessarily ensure a high level of literacy in the adult population, unless it is expected by the labour market.

According to the SIALS international survey on adult literacy – an initiative of the OECD – in a total of twenty countries the Hungarian adult population was the 15th in quantitative comprehension exercises and the 16th in the reading comprehension test (Table 1.3). In reading comprehension the performance of about one-third of the Hungarian population was on the lowest level and the performance of only 2.6% reached the highest level. Interestingly, Hungarians seem content with their reading skills. 72% of those with the worst results rated their own skills good. They probably had a good reason, since in response to the question whether their lack of literacy hinders their work, the proportion of negative answers was the highest in the Hungarian population (95%).

**Table 1.3**

*An international survey on reading comprehension in the 16-65 age group, 1994-98, average*

Country	Sweden	Finland	Norway	Netherlands	Canada	Germany	New Zealand	Denmark	Australia	United States	Belgium (Flemish parts)	Czech Republic	United Kingdom	Ireland	Switzerland (French parts)	Switzerland (Italian parts)	Switzerland (German parts)	Hungary	Slovenia	Poland	Portugal	Chile
Sweden		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Finland	▼		●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Norway	▼	●		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Netherlands	▼	▼	▼		●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Canada	▼	▼	▼	●		●	●	●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Germany	▼	▼	▼	▼	●		●	●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
New Zealand	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●		●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Denmark	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●		●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Australia	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●	●		●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
United States	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●	●	●		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Belgium (Flemish parts)	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Czech Republic	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●		●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
United Kingdom	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●		●	●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Ireland	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●		●	●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Switzerland (French parts)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	▼	●	●		●	●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Switzerland (Italian parts)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	▼	●	●	●		●	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Switzerland (German parts)	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●	●	●		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Hungary	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		▲	▲	▲	▲
Slovenia	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		●	●	▲
Poland	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●		●	▲
Portugal	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	●		●
Chile	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	●	

▲ Average performance significantly better than others in the same column

● No statistically significant difference

▼ Average performance significantly worse than others in the same column

Source: Literacy in the Information Age, 2000

The survey has shown that lifelong learning is still not widespread. Furthermore, the available training possibilities are distributed rather disproportionately, in contrast with international data. A manager in Hungary has five times the chance to participate in a training programme than a worker, while in other countries the proportion is 2:1 (Literacy in the Information Age (2000)).

## 1.5 CHANGES IN THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY (1989–1999)

### *GDP Trends*

In the second half of the nineties the more advanced East-Central European countries, Hungary amongst them, survived the crisis of the change of regime and the transition to a market economy. The austerity measures of 1995 (the so-called Bokros package) had their due results. From 1996 on, the Hungarian GDP increased more rapidly, with inflation decreasing at the same time. Since 1997 the GDP has had an annual growth of more than 4%, which is higher than the OECD or European Union average. Provided that the economic growth can be sustained without hindering external financial balance, the state budget will have more resources to spend on community areas (social security, health care, education) in the long run.

Considering economic development, the differences are striking between various regions of Hungary. The two extremes are Central Hungary and Northern Hungary. Central Hungary, where Budapest belongs, per capita GDP is 73% of the European Union average, while it is merely 33% in the Northern Hungarian region. The Northern part of the Hungarian Great Plain is far below the European average (34%), as well. In the Transdanubian region and in the Southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain per capita GDP is 38-51% of the EU average (1997 data).

Fundamental changes have taken place in the ownership and sector-related structure of the Hungarian economy during the nineties. The number of foreign companies has grown fourfold in the 1990-1998 period and foreign investment rate has grown twenty-five times. In 1997 45% of gross added value was produced by companies that were owned in part by foreign investors, a fact characteristic of the current state and future trends of the Hungarian economy. In addition, so far the quality of the Hungarian workforce has also been highly valued. In order to keep this capital in Hungary, the economic environment will have to remain favourable in the long run, part of which is a well-trained workforce. Hungarian education, professional training and higher education have key roles in this process.

### *Income and Consumption*

The real value of income and the consumption of the population decreased from the early nineties to 1996, but have been on the rise ever since. The level of consumption in 1999 did not reach the level it had attained four years before. The income gap between households in the lowest and in the highest tenth of the population had increased rapidly and the difference reached 7.5 times by 1995. The same difference within Budapest reached a striking tenfold while in small villages it was 5.9. Inequalities have further increased, although at a slower rate, since 1995. The reallocation of incomes had taken place with a real income decrease before 1995, which affected those at the lower end of the scale the worst. Families with many children and no regular income were more likely to sink to the bottom of the scale. In Hungary of all personal net income the bottom tenth received 3.3%, while the top tenth achieved 25% in the mid-nineties.



Income has become more and more determined by qualifications and economic positions. The income of white-collar staff decreased less extensively in the past four years than the income of blue-collar workers, whilst the advantage of the former grew from 58% in 1994 to 66% in 1998.

The most sensitive issue of Hungarian education was the permanently low income of teachers. In contrast with most European countries, in 1998 gross incomes in education were lower than the national average by 12%, in health care they were lower than the national average by 22%. At the same time in Europe people employed in the finance sector earn 40% more than the national average, while the same rate in Hungary is 110%.

### *Trends in the Labour Market, Economic Activity and Employment*

The nineties have seen a significant decrease in the demand for workforce. Between 1987 and 1997 the number of employees were reduced by more than 1.5 million people, while since 1997 the labour market has seemed stable. In 1998 the economically active population was approximately 4 million people, and it was the first year since 1990 that their number did not diminish. The size of the economically inactive population stopped increasing in 1998, although the activity rate is still rather low and the number of dependants per employed is still extremely high (Table 1.4).

*Table 1.4*

*Population and economic activity at the beginning of the year, 1990-1998 (in thousands)*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total population	10 375	10 355	10 337	10 310	10 277	10 246	10 212	10 174	10 135
Employment age	5 957	5 997	6 032	6 057	6 071	6 082	6 081	6 145	6 137
Employed*	5 227	5 052	4 534	4 090	3 882	3 793	3 743	3 728	3 747
Registered as unemployed**	24	101	406	663	632	520	496	478	464
Economically active population***	5 251	5 153	4 940	4 753	4 514	4 313	4 239	4 206	4 211
Economically inactive population****	5 124	5 202	5 397	5 557	5 763	5 933	5 973	5 968	5 924
Dependants*****	5 148	5 303	5 803	6 220	6 395	6 453	6 469	6 446	6 388
Dependants per one hundred employed	98	105	128	152	165	170	173	173	170
Registered unemployment rate	0.5	2	8.2	13.9	14	12	11.7	11.4	11
Activity rate	81.5	80.1	77.6	75.3	72	69	68.2	67.3	67.5

Source: Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1998

NB: Based on the labour force balance of the Hungarian economy

\* Excluding parents on child care allowance

\*\* Officially registered at the National Labour Centre

\*\*\* Total sum of employed and unemployed

\*\*\*\* Children below 6, students, pensioners, parents on child care allowance, housewives, passively unemployed individuals (who would like to be employed but do not seek jobs)

\*\*\*\*\* Inactive individuals and unemployed



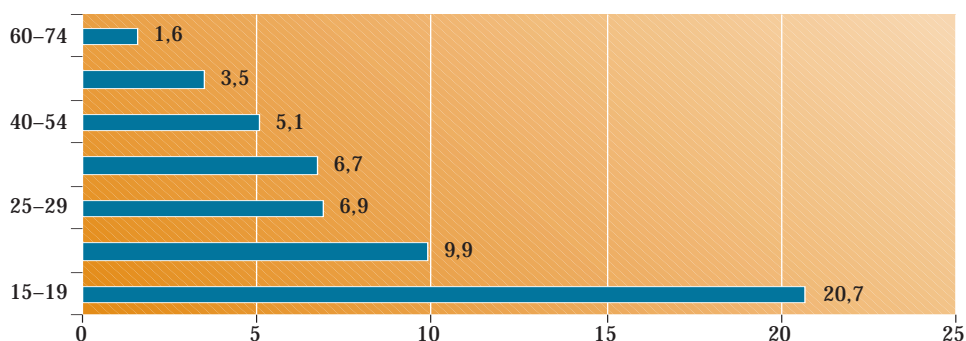
Supply on the labour market is permanently reduced by the fact that the time spent at schools has been significantly extended in the 1990s and students leave schools at a later point in their life. Many children start school late, at the age of 7; more students enrol in secondary schools and enrolment in higher education has doubled. Since the time spent on education has thus been extended, the educational system has a key role in not letting young people enter the labour market in the most critical year.

## *Unemployment*

The labour market of the early nineties was characterised by coercive and global unemployment due to an insufficient demand for workforce. The number of unemployed people increased particularly at the beginning of this period and the increase slowed down after 1993. In 1999 the rate of unemployment, better than ever before, dropped to an annual level of 7%, which is below the average in the European Union. The demographic characteristics have hardly changed: unemployment is worst amongst the youth and those with low-level qualifications. The rate of unemployment is relatively high in the 15-24 age group, but it is still better than the EU average (Fig. 1.3).

*Figure 1.3*

*Rate of unemployment according to age groups, 1999 last quarter (%)*



Source: KSH Monthly Statistical Notices, 2000 first quarter

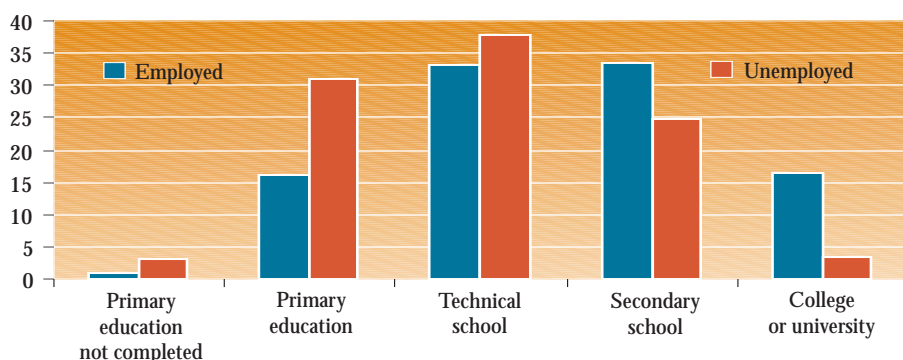
NB: Based on the Labour Force Survey

The low activity rate of the 20-30 age group must be pointed out. Among them especially low is the activity rate of young women (in the last quarter of 1999 the activity rate of men aged 20-24 was 68.7%, the same for women was 52.6%, in the 25-29 age group men's rate was 90.4%, women's rate was 58.8%). The low activity rate of young people may be explained in part by the expansion of higher education and the lengthened period of transition from school to work. Women's activity rate is reduced by childbirth and child care, as well. The inflexibility of the labour market is shown by the low proportion of part-time employment. Very few people can afford to work and raise children, or study, at the same time.

The chance of becoming unemployed is reduced by high qualifications. In the last quarter of 1999 the proportion of people with low or no qualifications among job seekers was 33.9%, while their proportion among employees was as low as 16.8% (Fig. 1.4).

*Figure 1.4*

*The distribution of unemployed and employed individuals according to their highest school qualifications, 1999 last quarter (%)*



Source: KSH Monthly Statistical Notices, 2000 first quarter

The most dangerous kind of unemployment for the society is permanent unemployment affecting the youth – for a period of one year or longer. (In 1998 young people aged 15-29 constituted 35% of all unemployed.) School-leavers cannot find work due to a lack of new or available jobs, or they become unemployed after a relatively short active period. Some help is available by means of active tools of the labour market, such as training, retraining and continuing education, among others. Year by year more and more people take advantage of these opportunities.

The large-scale restructuring of the Hungarian society in the nineties was primarily determined by qualifications and positions held in the labour market. The role of schools in particular, and training in general, have become extremely important. Essential skills and abilities necessary in the information society of the present and future are now highly valued.

## 1.6 SOCIAL TRENDS

Besides the economic growth starting in the late nineties, the social gap has increased, posing a major challenge for schools, whose social role is becoming more and more emphatic. As a result of a decline in state support for families in the recent years, poverty has grown amongst children, becoming their number one risk factor.

### *Poverty and its Main Characteristics in Hungary*

According to the 1995 income survey of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) the income of 8.7% of households and 12.1% of individuals was below the minimum old-age pension, a total of 1 229 398. Many of the poor are registered as unemployed or they are of employment age with no regular income, and the rate of dependants below 15 years of age is higher than the average. Based on income estimates, the risk of falling below poverty level was five times the national average for households with three or more children, and they were four times as likely to fall into the bottom tenth of the income scale as the national average. The

poverty risk factor is even higher in cases where the head of the household is unemployed: in 1995 the likelihood was fourfold to fall into the bottom five percent of the income scale, 3.2 times the national average to fall below the minimum old-age pension, 2.4 times to fall below the subjective poverty threshold and estimates put the risks even higher for 1997.

Poverty – including long-term poverty – also depends on school qualifications of household members, particularly on the qualifications of the head of the household. Their low qualifications increase by 1.5 times the chance of falling into the bottom five percent. While in 1990 poverty was the main reason for children at risk in half of the cases, in 1998 this proportion was 83%.

### *Health of Young People*

Certain mortality indicators of the Hungarian population (lung cancer, liver diseases, suicide) are extremely bad even in a global comparison. Hungarian life expectancy at birth is the worst in Europe. Health surveys at schools, job and military aptitude tests give little reason for optimism.

The results of health surveys at school between 1993 and 1998 show that the so-called civilisation diseases are the most common amongst the youth. In the 1997/98 school-year a national survey found motor disorders in 15% of students, and 11% of student wore glasses. What is even worse is that the occurrence of these disorders is higher in older age.

### *Deviation among Young People*

The nineties have seen the emergence of a number of subculture-related groups among young people. Age groups have become more heterogeneous and professional markets appeared to supply the 'needs'. Youth unemployment and the difficulties of starting a career have resulted in the rise of a new kind of subculture-related groups.

One of the earliest forms of deviant behaviour is running away from home. Police statistics in the late nineties show 5 000 cases of missing children annually, which is a significant increase.

Alcohol consumption has grown significantly in the last twenty years. The rate of increase is even higher in the younger age groups. The number of registered alcohol and drug addicts in 1995 was four times the 1995 data, and while this rate of increase was 'only' 3.5 times higher in the 20-34 age group, it was six times higher among those below 19 years of age.

### *Education and Public Opinion*

Public education is not the subject of heated political and social debates in Hungary. People are relatively content with education, compared to other public responsibilities, and their satisfaction has not dropped during the nineties. In general, people are satisfied with the quality of education and this satisfaction has increased during the course of the decade. However educated individuals and city-dwellers are less satisfied than individuals with a lower level of qualification or those living in villages.

Public responsibilities directly affecting the standard of living are generally given a higher priority than education. However, when asked about their preferences in the distribution of public support, people put education second, with healthcare on top of the list (Table 1.5).

*Table 1.5*

*Public opinion concerning the proposed ratio of the financial support of various public fields (in the percentage of total expenditure)*

	1997	1999
Health care	24.7	22.1
Education	14.6	13.8
Public order and safety	13.3	12.6
Building and reconstruction of flats	8.2	12.0
Social Care	12.9	10.6
Development of infrastructure and traffic	8.9	10.1
Culture, Sport	5.9	6.6
Environmental protection, improvement of local environment	5.7	6.3
Support for local enterprises	3.9	3.7
Support for local NGOs	1.9	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Public opinion on public education, 1999

The priorities of clients of public education do not necessarily coincide with priorities of stakeholders within the system of public education. Public opinion thinks it less necessary to develop the system from within – by improving the life of teachers, developing new textbooks and curricula, building new schools or classrooms – than attaining objectives like supporting talented students, extra care for the disadvantaged or spending more on student welfare. Internal objectives of education have become greatly overshadowed in public opinion. At the same time there is an internal objective in education which is supported by the population: supplying modern technology for schools (Table 1.6).

*Table 1.6.*

*Change in preferences of the population concerning public education between 1990 and 1999 (rank order 1 to 7)*

	1990	1995	1997	1999
Upgrading of school equipment	3.6 (2)	3.0 (1)	2.6 (1)	2.9 (1)
Support for education of gifted pupils	4.0 (3–5)	3.4 (2)	3.5 (2)	3.8 (2–3)
Support for education of handicapped pupils	4.6 (7)	3.6 (3)	3.6 (3)	3.8 (2–3)
Allowances for pupils (scholarship, meal, day-care allow)	4.5 (6)	4.0 (4)	3.9 (4)	3.9 (4)
Improvement of teachers' living conditions	4.0 (3–5)	4.3 (5)	4.9 (6)	4.9 (5)
Creation of new syllabi and textbooks	3.2 (1)	4.6 (6)	4.3 (5)	5.0 (6)
Building new schools, classrooms	4.0 (3–5)	5.0 (7)	5.1 (7)	5.7 (7)

Source: Public opinion on public education, 1999

# Chapter 2

## Public Education Administration

### 2.1 GENERAL FEATURES OF THE HUNGARIAN ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

With the new government taking office in 1998, and the major amendments to the Public Education Act in 1999, key elements in the administration of public education have been affected, but the model of shared responsibilities that came about in the early nineties has basically been unchanged. The essential characteristics of this model are as follows:

- the administration of public education is rather decentralised and administrative responsibilities are shared by a number of players;
- horizontally speaking, responsibilities on a national level are shared by the directly responsible Ministry of Education and some other Ministries;
- vertically speaking, responsibilities are shared on a national, regional, local and school level, which means a total of four levels of administration;
- on the regional (county) and local levels educational administration is integrated into the general system of public administration; in other words there is no separate organisation for the administration of education;
- the role of the regional level is relatively weak, whereas the scope of local responsibilities is fairly wide;
- local governments are many, their average size is small.

There are four distinct levels within the Hungarian system of public education administration: (a) central or governmental, (b) regional, (c) local and (d) school level. There are three distinct functions on each level: (a) politics, reconciliation of interests or consultation, (b) governmental, administrative or authoritative and (c) professional functions. All these functions are associated with players of various administrative responsibilities (organisations, institutions and bodies) (Table 2.1 on the next page).

The system is characterised by a set of complementary and mutually confining autonomies. Potential conflicts between these autonomies can be handled in a system of conciliatory relations and partnerships, or through legal action. The prevailing system of public education administration provides a rather large scope of freedom for the players, with equally large inequalities in provision and quality. In the given system special efforts have to be made, and special tools applied, for quality assurance.

#### *The Administration of Various Fields*

Significant changes took place in public education administration due to the 1999 amendment of the 1993 Public Education Act. The autonomy of the school and its maintainer were, to some extent, reduced, whereas the role of national level increased. In particular:

- Decisions concerning the content of teaching can be made only at the school or on the national level, the regional and local levels are insignificant in this respect. Since 1993 schools were relatively free to decide on the number of lessons per week for compulsory school subjects. Frame curricula to be introduced by the 1999 amendment are expected to limit this freedom considerably.
- As for planning and school structures administrative responsibilities are spread among the various levels. The list of compulsory school subjects and the related teaching content are defined centrally, optionally augmented by schools with locally specific subjects and content. Institutional structures and potential deviations from it are defined by provisions of the law. School foundation is a local matter. Exams are regulated centrally, with an option of extra local content.
- Schools and local authorities have a major role in personnel decisions, on the basis of national regulations. (Teachers are employed by the school, headmasters by the local government. Promotion and salaries are decided locally, on the basis of national regulations.)
- The local level has a decisive role in the allocation of resources, however, most schools make their own financial decisions.

Table 2.1

*The system of Hungarian public education administration: levels, functions and players*

Levels	Politics, conciliation of interests, consultation functions	Governmental, administrative or authority functions	Professional functions
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliament</li> <li>• The Parliament Committee for Educational, Scientific, Youth and Sports Affairs</li> <li>• National Public Education Council and its standing committees</li> <li>• National Committee for Minorities</li> <li>• Council of Public Education</li> <li>• National Council for Vocational Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education</li> <li>• Office of the Commissioner of Educational Rights</li> <li>• National Public Education Evaluation and Examination Centre</li> <li>• Other Ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National institutes involved in educational research and development (OKI, OI, KÁ OKSZI, NSZI, PTMIK, Comenius 2000 Programme Office)*</li> </ul>
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Committee of County-level regional government</li> <li>• County-level bodies involved in regional development and education planning</li> <li>• County-level Committee for Vocational Training</li> <li>• Board of Trustees of Public Foundation for Public Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional units of the National Public Education Evaluation and Examination Centre</li> <li>• County clerks</li> <li>• Education department of county-level regional government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public education institutions financed by county governments</li> <li>• Educational service providers of counties and small regions (MPIs, service associations)</li> </ul>
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Committee of local government</li> <li>• Decision-making bodies of Task Forces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town clerk</li> <li>• Mayor's Office</li> <li>• Administrative bodies of school control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local educational service providers</li> </ul>
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Board</li> <li>• Students' Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headmaster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff</li> </ul>

Source: Report on Education in Hungary 2000

NB: Players introduced after 1998 are italicised.

The individual functions are often indistinguishable in practice (eg. on a school level the headmaster has certain professional functions, the teaching staff has certain functions in conciliation of interests and administration).

\* See the List of Abbreviations

### ***The Responsibility of Providing the Public with Education; Owners and Maintainers of Schools***

In Hungary the provision of education is the responsibility of local communities and their authoritative bodies, the local governments. The overwhelming majority of public education institutions are owned by local and regional (county) governments. A peculiar feature of the system of administration is the fact that education providers are not obliged to finance the educational institution. Local governments are free to decide how they intend to provide the education: they can either have their own educational institution or make an agreement with the maintainer of an educational institution. The other key feature of the system is that the provision of education, although it is associated with levels of administration, is not monopolistic.

Between 1993 and 1999 the proportion of schools maintained by local governments dropped from 90% to 82% and the proportion of schools maintained privately or by churches increased from 4% to 10%. Local governments transfer more and more schools to regional (county) governments.

Although the basic characteristics of the system of administration have prevailed, there were changes in certain areas in the late nineties. After the general elections of 1998 cultural responsibilities were taken away from the former Ministry of Culture and Education as its new name is the Ministry of Education (OM). At the same time, responsibilities concerning the governmental control of vocational training were transferred from the former Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Education (where they had been in the first place, before the early nineties). Other Ministries still have a say in this matter, however, integrating the administration of vocational training with public education administration has reduced the number of governmental players and on the whole has facilitated coordination.

The 1999 amendment of the Public Education Act has consolidated and extended the responsibilities and scope of governmental bodies in general and the responsibilities and scope of the Ministry and the Minister in particular, primarily with respect to the teaching content of public education, control and in-service training for teachers. Vertically speaking, responsibilities are still shared by central government bodies and their local units, regional (county) governments, local governments and public education institutions. All these have their own sphere of authority, limiting each other and presuming active cooperation. The rights of institutions and their maintainers have been limited to some extent.

On the basis of the 1998 amendment, the Ministry of Education has created its own administrative authority, the National Public Education Evaluation and Examination Centre (OKÉV). The organisation's competence includes: (a) the management of the national control of education, measurement, evaluation and quality assurance, (b) acting as an authority with respect to matters within the Minister's scope, (c) organising state exams and deciding about requests for remedy, (d) editing the national list of experts and examiners, (e) contribution to regional development in educational matters, (f) running the public education information system and tasks incurring therein.

### ***Public Administration and Educational Administration***

Ten years of experience since 1990, and preparations to join the European Union have made it clear that certain changes are necessary in the system of Hungarian public administration, which may affect education. The two-year government agenda to develop this field (1999-2000) has the



objective of creating a system that provides services, making its operation more transparent, making more effective use of resources and primarily relying on quality improvement as a way to increase its capacities. The ministries will have to work out the strategies of their respective sector and not get lost in dealing with individual cases. Cases will have to be dealt with by national and/or local authorities and administrative bodies. The government policy does not support the creation of further decentralised organisations, instead, it calls for a new scope for administrative authorities that are directly responsible to the government and have improved working conditions.

A key feature of the proposed reform in public administration is the revision of regional divisions, in accordance with the requirements of EU-ascension and regional development. During this process the focus of public administration has shifted to the regional level, which also led to the strengthening of small regions.

## 2.2 LEVELS OF CONTROL IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

### *Central Control*

The cabinet member responsible for the sector of public education is the Minister of Education, who also supervises higher education, vocational education and scientific research. Following the 1999 Amendment, the central administration can only interfere with the management of an educational institution as a final resort: provisions of the law assign strategic leadership to the Minister, who can maintain legal provision by indirect means only. All this is a significant extension of the scope of central responsibilities, but in no way limits the tasks and resources of local administrations and school maintainers.

The Public Education Act assigns three types of responsibilities to the Minister: (a) direct control, (b) regulatory powers and (c) development tasks. The 1999 Amendment has broadened the sector-related responsibilities of the Minister considerably, and prescribed new tasks (e.g. issuing frame curricula, providing the necessary conditions for quality assurance). Direct supervision of public education is performed by the Deputy Secretary.

As vocational education is a high priority, the role of the Deputy Secretary responsible for controlling and supervising vocational training should be given due emphasis. The Deputy Secretary is responsible for preparing regulations concerning vocational training, supervising additions to the National Training Register, as well as the international equivalence of professional qualifications, the system of professional examinations, tasks related to professional textbooks, adult education within and outside the school system, career orientation and finally taking care of issues related to the financial background of vocational training in general and the Vocational Training Fund, in particular.

The 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act introduced the Office of the Commissioner for Educational Rights (OJBH), providing the Minister with new means. The newly created office is an organisational unit of the Ministry of Education and it is responsible to the Minister. The function of the office is to protect the rights of parents, children, pupils, students and instructors as specified in the Constitution and other acts of Parliament. The Commissioner issues a yearly report.

It is remarkable that in Hungary the Ministry of Interior has relatively high number of responsibilities concerning public education. Since the administration of public education has been integrated into the system of local governments, and the state funding of public education into the



funding of local governments, the Ministry of Interior – as the supervisor of the system of local governments and public administration – inevitably plays an important role in the control of public education, although in a rather indirect way. The cooperation of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance has become more significant. As the significance of applying financial means to influence processes on the local and the school level in public education increases, the Ministry of Education has to play an active role in elaborating financial regulations affecting public education. Cooperation with other Ministries is also necessary. Among others, cooperation with the Ministry of Economy – the department responsible for the implementation of the government's employment and welfare policy – is a high priority, as well as cooperation with the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs. This is most evident in areas affecting the relations between education and the labour market and dealing with underprivileged youth on the periphery of society.

The ascension process preceding the EU membership has greatly increased the significance of cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, the department responsible for the coordination and control of preparing a national plan for development. Such a plan is a prerequisite for Hungary to join development programmes of the community and to gain access to Structural Funds allocated for the development of education, as soon as Hungary becomes a full member of the European Union. Furthermore, it is the Ministry of Economy that is responsible for the elaboration of the national employment policy and for the operation of the labour market organisation, which are key factors for public education.

The central administration of public education relies on various national institutes responsible for development, providing services and performing research – these are the so-called background institutions. The Ministry of Education controls (a) the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research (OI), the National Institute of Public Education (OKI), (c) the Kiss Árpád National Service Office of Public Education (KÁ OKSZI), (d) the Comenius 2000 Programme Office (responsible for preparing quality management in public education, in cooperation with the OKÉV), (e) the Methodology and Information Centre for In-service Teacher Training (PTMIK) and (f) the National Institute of Vocational Education (NSZI).

### *Regional Control*

The regional level in the control of education is comprised of counties. Their responsibilities and powers are weak in comparison with the local and particularly with the national level. Local authorities are not subordinated to county authorities. According to the provisions of the Local Governments Act, however, county governments are responsible for all tasks of public education beyond the scope of local governments (e.g. secondary education, special education, art schools). County governments maintain somewhat more than 6% of all educational institutions and 22% of secondary schools.

The county level has gained considerable significance since the mid-nineties. One of the reasons for this is the fact that more and more settlements yield some of their secondary schools to county governments, and another reason is that due to the 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act, county governments are responsible for regional planning, a task to be performed in cooperation with local governments. Mid-range plans for development (planning for a period of six years) were completed in 1997, observing the content and structure proposed by the Ministry of Education. These plans were recommendations for local governments. In half of the counties local governments were requested to pass a decision on the acceptance of the plans, a condition often required if one applied for financial support by public education funds,

in accordance with the 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act. In the late nineties tasks related to regional development and regional planning have gained significance within the Ministry of Education – primarily in view of the preparations for EU-membership and the access to Structural Funds.

### *Local Control*

In Hungary most decisions concerning public education are passed by local governments. In 1999 there were 3 153 local governments in Hungary and 2 432 of them maintained some public education institutions, 1798 maintained at least an eight-grade primary school (Table 2.2). 75% of all local governments functioning as school maintainers and 55% of local governments maintaining at least an eight-grade primary school operated in settlements with a population of 2 000 or less, a proportion identical with the one three years before. In other words, there is a large number of small local governments providing schooling on the equivalent of ISCED 2 level (Table 2.3).

*Table 2.2*

*The number of local governments with educational responsibilities, 1994/95 and 1999/2000*

	1994/95	1999/2000
Total number of local governments	3 147	3 153
Local governments maintaining no educational institution	704	721
Allows for member schools only	nd	69
Total number of local governments maintaining schools	2 443	2 432
Local governments maintaining nursery schools only	177	201
Local governments maintaining primary schools only	116	44
Local governments maintaining nursery schools as well as primary schools	2 149	2 072
Local governments maintaining at least eight -grade primary schools	1 822	1 798
Local governments maintaining secondary schools as well	223	233

Source: Calculations by Mrs László Szalay based on statistical data of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education

Regardless of their population size, all 2 432 local governments that maintain educational institutions have extensive local rights as guaranteed by the Public Education Act. This rather large number is unparalleled in Europe (in countries where local responsibilities are as great as in Hungary the total number of local governments is about 200-300).

Control skills of local school maintainers concerning public education vary greatly. For instance, 60% of local governments have no clerk dealing with educational matters and this proportion is much worse in smaller settlements.

The largest proportion of educational institutions are maintained by small towns and villages. Because of the large numbers and the small sizes, cooperation between settlements deserves much attention. There is little willingness for partnership in Hungary, in spite of the fact that the educational administration encourages cooperation in several ways. Cooperation between settlements has many forms besides maintaining a common school (e.g. jointly employing a speech therapist or organising in-service teacher training). Local cooperation is aided by educational planning and public funds support on the county level. Cooperation is not only justified between small settlements. It is particularly important that cities with capacities allowing for students to commute from neighbouring settlements should jointly organise related tasks.

Contracts or agreements, however, are not made frequently, the only exception being pedagogical service providers (e.g. educational counselling), the activity of which is in fact characterised by formal cooperation.

*Table 2.3*

*The number of local governments with educational responsibilities, according to population size, 1999/2000*

Population (January 1st, 1998)	Total number of local governments	Local governments maintaining				
		no educational institution	member schools	a less-than-eight- grade primary school (as well)*	at least eight- grade primary schools	secondary schools**
below 500	985	724	40	123	32	2
500-999	689	67	27	221	328	6
1 000-1 999	663	2	2	27	625	5
2 000-4 999	517			10	513	28
5 000-9 999	136			22	136	47
10 000-19 999	77			36	78	62
20 000-49 999	45			35	45	42
50 000-99 999	28			25	28	28
100 000-199 999	12			12	12	12
above 200 000	1			1	1	1
Total	3 153	793	69	512	1 798	233

Source: Calculations by Mrs László Szalay based on statistical data of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education

\* Six-grade and eight-grade general secondary schools appear in the statistics as less-than-eight-grade primary schools

\*\* Local governments maintaining general secondary schools, secondary vocational schools and technical schools

## ***Institutional Control***

No major changes took place in the late nineties concerning the legal framework of school responsibilities, defined essentially by the 1993 Public Education Act and its 1996 Amendment. Schools have a great autonomy. Most are managed independently with school directors as employers and the pedagogical programme drawn up by the school itself. Despite an increase in central responsibilities, school autonomy is still a decisive feature in the control of Hungarian public education.

The greatest challenges for independent institutions in the recent years were diminishing number of children, budget restraints and the preparations of pedagogical programmes.

Particularly difficult tasks included accepting the timetables that define the workload of teachers and which distribute responsibilities among school staff; the wording of pedagogical programmes; choosing or creating local curricula and adapting it to the idiosyncratic circumstances of the school. An important task on future agendas is going to be the control of school tasks related to the modification of pedagogical programmes, which will rely on experiences concerning motivation and conflict management. A new and distinguished task of control will be the establishment of quality assurance systems on the level of institutions, which – according to the provisions of the 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act – is a mandatory supplement to pedagogical programmes.

More and more attention is paid to the training, selection and in-service training of school directors due to the great significance of decisions passed on the school level. A market for school management training has emerged in the nineties: there is a greater selection of locations and content of such programmes; accredited programmes are spreading rapidly, the role of county pedagogical institutions has diminished and private companies have appeared.

## 2.3 THE SYSTEM OF EVALUATION, STATISTICS AND INFORMATION FLOW IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The new government, taking office in 1998, aims to develop a system of supervision, evaluation and quality assurance in Hungary. These functions were defined in the 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act and the government was entitled to establish the OKÉV in order to organise and coordinate these activities.

Supervision in education is performed by those listed in the National Expert List. Their number leapt in the late nineties: in 1999 the list contained 4 878 names, 72% more than two years before. The work of experts may be improved by way of defining standards with references to quality. The evaluation of the work of public education institutions is the responsibility of school maintainers. National evaluation on the part of the state examines strategic issues and national indicators of efficiency. These include Monitor-type measurements of student achievements, some of them with the coordination of international organisations (IEA, OECD).

One of the main objectives of the central administration is to set up quality assurance systems on the school level. National guidelines for quality assurance activities taking place in schools are elaborated by the OKÉV. The elaboration and coordination of the related development programme is done by the newly established Comenius 2000 Programme Office explicitly maintained by the Ministry of Education for this purpose.

The statistical system of public education has been in a state of emergency and transformation ever since the early nineties. Current statistics are unable to monitor students according to programme type and are also unable to distinguish schools from locations of operation, or to size up educational workforce. The information system introduced in public education is characterised by the following features: (a) three levels of observation (administrative, public education institution, applied programme levels); (b) data collection will be rendered to level of observation, location and content of activity; (c) a new unified conceptual model will be applied, based on acts of Parliament and statistical requirements; (d) the scope and quantity of collected information will be increased. In the new system data will be collected primarily by electronic means.

## 2.4 PEDAGOGICAL SERVICES

The Public Education Act obliges county governments to organise pedagogical services. A large part of these services are provided by pedagogical institutes maintained by county governments. Other service providers include central institutes of research and development and private enterprises, whilst the role of higher education is becoming more and more important.

The most important pedagogical services are tasks related to evaluation; counselling in the field of school subjects and school management; services for authorities (e.g. professional support for county-level planning); documentation and information tasks (e.g. forwarding professional information, collecting educational documents); and organisational tasks of in-service training, student contests and student orientation and counselling. In 1999 there were 18 operational county-level pedagogical institutions, plus 1 in Budapest; all were maintained by local governments. Services are provided for public education institutions, school maintainers, teachers and students (student unions).

According to the provisions of the Public Education Act, the key function of pedagogical counselling is to introduce and disseminate teaching methods, assist the preparation of regulations on the school level (pedagogical programmes, local curricula, school rules), assist pedagogic development and the selection of textbooks and teaching aids as well as individual counselling. In 1999 there were 1 514 counsellors in Hungary (Budapest included), a figure practically identical with the 1996 data (1 515).

Institutions providing pedagogical services are but one of the players active in the field of in-service teacher training. In the school year 1998/99 a total of 1 474 in-service training courses with 30 or more contact hours were taught, and the total number of participants was 35 193. This is a quantum leap compared to 1996. More and more courses were organised in the form of training sessions and in-service training was related to specific pedagogical tasks (mental hygiene, measurement and evaluation, development pedagogy, children and youth protection) in an increasing proportion. In-service training had the largest participation rate among nursery school teachers (32% of them enrolled) and primary school teachers (23% of them enrolled) and participation was the lowest among secondary school teachers (14% of them enrolled in such training). In addition to this, 13 institutes were engaged in the organisation of higher educational or professional training, offering courses for teachers on a university level at county towns. Monthly publications of institutes (newsletters, brochures etc.) and web-sites (each institute has its own) play an important role in the mediation and dissemination of professional information.

## 2.5 THE INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The legal provisions of 1993 brought about bodies and organisations for consultation and the reconciliation of interests whose function is to involve the broader profession and social partners into decisions concerning public education. The role of these bodies and organisations have been altered considerably by later Amendments.

The most important changes affected the National Public Education Council (OKNT) and its professional committees. The function of the OKNT is to involve partners that have a stake in issues related to the content of education (curricular regulations, textbooks, teaching aids, examinations, in-service teacher training). The Council is made up of representatives of professional organisations of teachers, teacher training colleges, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, since 1996 the Minister of Education, and since 1999 the representatives of national associations of employers and chambers. According to the 1999 Amendment, the powers of the Council are limited in passing judgement on the National Core Curriculum and textbooks. The OKNT helped set up the National Committee of Secondary School-Leaving Examination with half of its members delegated by the OKNT, the other half by the Council of Higher Education and Science, and the National Pedagogical In-service Training and Accreditation Committee (PAB). The latter played a dominant role in in-service teacher training (for instance in the accreditation of programmes) up to 1999, when it was terminated and its function was taken over by the PAB with far more limited powers, basically as a consultative body. Accreditation of in-service teacher training programmes was transferred to the Body of Pedagogical In-service Training and Accreditation (PAT) set up by the Minister, with a few members delegated by the OKNT. The other important body involving social partners is the Council of Public Education (KT), which helps the Minister by supporting decisions, counselling and making proposals in the field of public education. The KT deals with all issues of public education policy, except for ones related to the status of public employ-

ees and waging. The KT is comprised of representatives of all the major stakeholders in public education (national organisations of teachers, trade unions, organisations of parents and students, local governments and self-governments of minorities, maintainers of schools other than the state or the local government, Ministries and national authorities having a stake in education). Each partner has four delegates, except government offices, which have one each. Due to its composition, the KT may play an important role in discussing the key issues concerning those regulatory and financial issues of public education that need a broad social consensus, however, it has failed to play such a role. We have to emphasise that the secretarial tasks of both the OKNT and the KT are performed by the staff of the Ministry of Education, Department of Public Education and Minorities Relations, which limits the independence of these bodies.

Professional committees have an important role in supporting the decisions of the Minister. The role and scope of the National Committee for Minorities has increased considerably. Recommendations and opinions concerning students' rights are given by the National Council for Students' Rights. Its nine members represent the Minister, unions of students aged 6-14 and unions of students aged 15-18, in equal proportions.

An important role, affecting public education among others, is played by the Council for the Reconciliation of Interests of Public Institutions (KIÉT), which is part of the Council for the Reconciliation of Interests. This body consists of representatives of employers, trade unions and chambers and it reconciles interests related to the status of public employees and wages. The role of this body was limited by the fact that it had no representatives of local governments maintaining schools. In the Council for the Reconciliation of Interests in Public Education, (KÖÉT) newly set up in 1995, local governments were also represented as employers.

Reconciliation with social partners is particularly important in vocational training. The National Council for Training (OKT) set up in 1991 is a trilateral body. Following the 1995 Amendment to the Vocational Training Act the role of the OKT was taken over by the National Council for Vocational Training (OSZT). This body has five sides, the classic trilateral arrangement augmented by representatives of school maintainers and chambers. The OSZT is a body providing opinions, recommendations and supporting decisions and has no right to pass decisions or allocate funds. It performs no reconciliation of interests and its function is mainly to serve as a discussion forum in educational matters that may lead to more balanced decisions that respect various interests.

There are also county-level forums that reconcile interests in vocational training. The so-called county employment councils were established by the 1991 Employment Act. Their most important function is to allocate the increasing proportion of Vocational Training Funds that support decentralised institutions, as well as to invite and support project proposals. According to the 1998 Amendment to the Act on Contributions to Vocational Training, Hungarian counties and Budapest are under obligation to set up their individual committee for vocational training. Their members are appointed by the Minister based on the recommendations of employers, employees, local governments maintaining vocational schools, regional chambers of commerce and public education funds. Due to their composition, these committees aid the harmonisation of resources in the field of human resource development (regional development funds, Labour Market Funds, public foundations). Negotiations with social partners take place on the local, regional and school level, as well.

Various non-governmental organisations have an ever increasing role in the field of public education: the Ministry of Education knew of more than 110 registered national organisations in 1999.



# Chapter 3

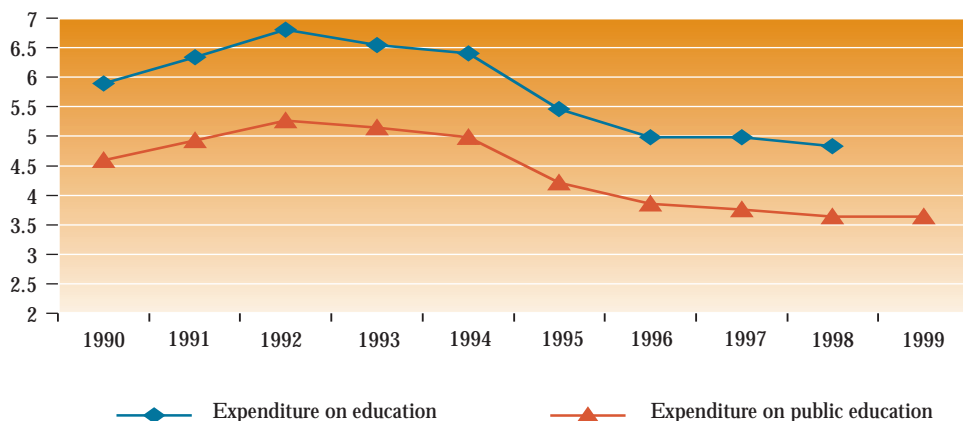
## Financing Public Education

The basic principles of financing public education did not change considerably throughout the 1990s (details below). The 1996 Public Education Act and its 1999 Amendments, however, meant major improvements to the system – they meant stronger state guarantees and the independence of financial support – and introduced a more sophisticated system of additional grants and earmarked funds for high professional and political priorities in education.

### 3.1 EXPENDITURES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

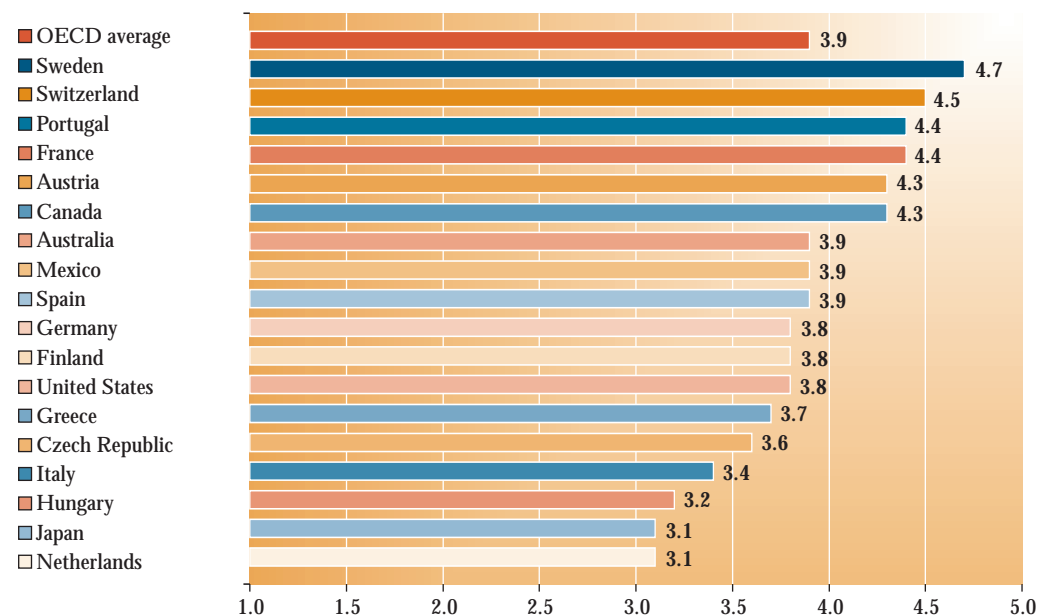
Budget expenditure on education in general and on public education in particular in the percentage of the GDP increased in the early nineties, then slowly began to diminish. A sudden fall began in the mid-nineties: the percentage decreased from 4.98% in 1994 to 3.64% in 1998. This trend stopped in 1999: expenditure on public education that year was the same as in the previous year, 3.64% (Fig. 3.1). Total spending on public education is shown only by an indicator that includes expenditures by households (people), corporations and the non-profit sector, which is based on estimates for lack of available data. Taking all that into consideration, Hungary spent 5.27% of its Gross Domestic Product on education in 1998.

*Figure 3.1*  
*Budget expenditure on education and public education\* in percentage of GDP, 1990-1999*



Source: Data of the Ministry of Education (forecast for 1999)

\* Expenditure on public education includes pre-school, primary and secondary education, expenditure on further education includes higher and other education.

*Figure 3.2**Expenditure on public education in percentage of GDP in OECD countries, 1998*

Source: Education at a Glance, 2000

The data for 1998 show that Hungary spent less on public education than the OECD average. Data including post-secondary education and non-budgetary (private) spending shows that among OECD countries only Japan and the Netherlands spent a smaller proportion of its domestic production on public education than Hungary (Fig. 3.2).

Budget spending on education per student in percentage of the GDP dropped significantly in Hungary in the late nineties and this trend did not reverse until 1999. In spite of the decrease, this indicator (budget spending on education per student in percentage of the GDP) was near the OECD average, except for secondary education, where it was below the OECD average (Table 3.1).

The changes are explained in part by economic growth, in part by an increased spending on public education. In the first 'crisis period' between 1990 and 1994 there was a dramatic fall in the GDP, whereas expenditures on public education (up to 1992) increased significantly and then temporarily stabilised at a relatively high percentage of Gross Domestic Product (up to 1994). At that point Hungary was among the countries spending the highest percentage of GDP on public education. From 1993 on, public education norms were frozen, indicating budgetary limits on the one hand, and the fact that the educational administration was unwilling to finance further expansion of capacities on the other, while the number of students (especially in primary schools) kept decreasing. A growing financial involvement of local governments practically compensated for the real value loss of support from the state budget (Fig. 3.3 and Table 3.2).



Table 3.1

*Budget spending on education per student in percentage of per capita GDP in certain OECD countries on various levels of education, 1997*

Country	Nursery school	Primary	Lower secondary	Higher secondary
Austria	21	27	31	41
Belgium (Flemish parts)*	12	16	nd	nd
Canada	17	nd	nd	nd
Czech Republic	19	15	25	31
Finland	31	23	23	27
France	16	17	29	34
Germany*	19	16	21	43
Hungary*	21	21	20	23
Ireland	12	12	nd	nd
Greece*	nd	17	nd	nd
Italy*	nd	nd	nd	nd
Netherlands	15	15	23	22
Switzerland*	9	24	29	42
Spain	16	20	21	33
Sweden	14	27	27	27
United Kingdom*	26	16	nd	nd
Australia	nd	17	23	29
Average of OECD countries	17	19	24	30

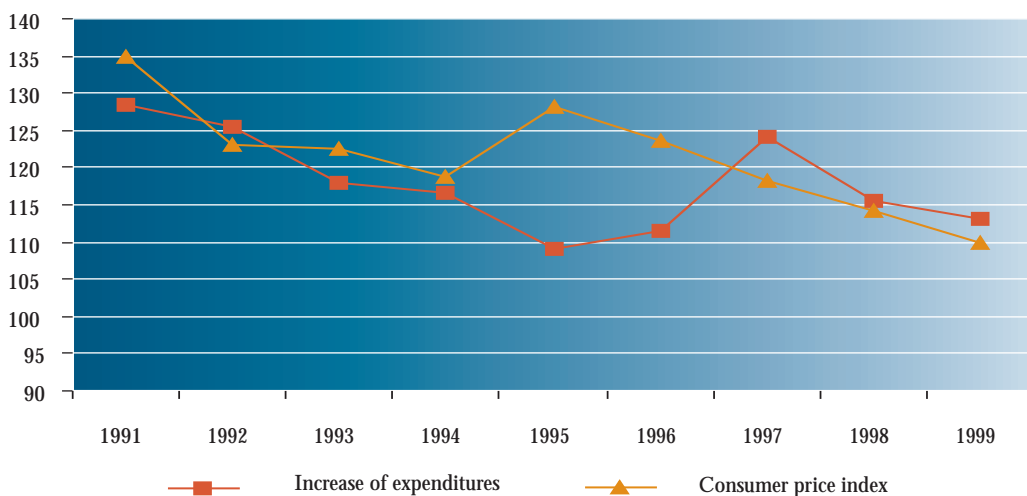
Source: Education at a Glance, 2000

NB: The individual school levels are defined differently in various countries

\* Budget expenditure only or education financed exclusively by budget expenditure

Figure 3.3

*The increase of expenditures in public education and consumer price index, 1991-1999  
(previous year = 100%)*



Source: Ministry of Education, state budget reports

Table 3.2

*The state budget and public education expenditures of local governments, 1991–1999 (in HUF)*

Expenditure	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999*
Total public education expenditures of the state budget <sup>1</sup>	126	157	186	217	241	268	327	378	428
The proportion of the above appearing at the level of local governments	122	151	177	211	235	261	320	366	413
The proportion of the above as disposable normative support	71	84	95	93	94	135	163	180	211
Disposable normative support as percentage of total public education expenditure of local governments (%)	58.5	55.8	53.6	44.1	40.0	51.7	50.9	49.2	51.2
Earmarked and centralised support <sup>2</sup>	–	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.3	3.5**	14.7	19.1	19.8
Earmarked and centralised support as percentage of total public education expenditure of local governments (%)	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.6	1.3	4.6	5.2	4.8
Total amount of state support as percentage of total public education expenditure of local governments (%)	58.5	56.2	53.9	44.3	40.6	53.1	55.5	54.4	56.0

Source: Ministry of Education, state budget reports

\* Preliminary data (calculations by László Limbacher)

\*\* Wage policy measures also had centralised allocations in 1996.

<sup>1</sup> Based on financial reports of local governments and state-financed institutions, excluding education not financed by the state. Also excluding educational counselling, career orientation, methodology and other responsibilities. Excluding primary art schools before 1994.<sup>2</sup> Excluding certain allocations of the Ministry of Education that support public education institutions in part only.

The GDP stopped decreasing in the stabilisation period of the economy (1995-1996), however, the position of education in the budget did change. The austerity measures of the budget and financial difficulties of local governments resulted in a decreasing proportion of educational expenditures. Austerity measures were not followed by much rationalisation: the number of employees did not drop and the institutional structure was not altered. A rather high inflation devalued the income of teachers, and material expenses were reduced to the minimum. The joint effect of demographic trends (namely a drop in the number of schoolchildren), normative support and high inflation made curtailment of resources possible and, technically speaking, easy in the field of public education. In the 1997-1999 period there was a dynamic boom in the economy with an annual GDP growth of 4-5%. Public education expenditures of the budget increased in real value, but not as fast as the GDP. Although the absolute position of education improved, its relative position became somewhat worse than before 1998.

### 3.2 THE MAIN FEATURES OF FUNDING HUNGARIAN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The principles to fund Hungarian public education follow from the 1990 Local Government Act. According to the provisions of the Act, primary and secondary education is provided by local governments, but the overall responsibility remains with the state. Financial guarantees are given jointly by the state and the local governments.

Financial coverage of public education is provided primarily by the budget with contributions by the school maintainer, optionally augmented by tuition fees paid by students and other revenues of the school.

Financial support of public education by the state is defined in the annual budget. State support appears primarily in the budget of the Ministry of Interior: this chapter contains the normative support of local governments as well as some of the centralised allocations earmarked for public education. State support covers an average of 50-70% of public education expenditures of local governments.

There are two types of state support: normative and earmarked subsidies. Local governments receive normative subsidies automatically, whereas they have to individually apply for earmarked subsidies. Normative support is generally calculated according to the number of pupils. Local governments may freely spend the normative support.

Maintainers of schools are also free to plan the school budget, the only restriction being that this budget has to cover the tasks of the school as defined in the relevant legal provisions. Local governments control the expenditures of schools by approving school budgets.

According to the principle of sector independence, the normative support given to school maintainers other than local governments and the state cannot be less than the same normative support given to local governments. Church-affiliated schools are also entitled to additional support on the basis of their contract with the state. Additional school maintainers (other than local governments) are also entitled to further support if they make a contract with the local government to provide the task of public education.

### 3.3 EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURES IN THE BUDGET

In the 1997–1999 period – as opposed to trends in previous years – in every year public education expenditures increased to a greater extent than the consumer price index. The proportion of the increase between 1998 and 1999 was 13.2% in nominal value and 3.2% in real value.

The increase of expenditures in real value was due to the wage increase in public education. Following the considerable decrease in real value in 1996 (by over 10%) the average increase of gross incomes was 23% in 1997 and 18.1% in 1998.

The proportion of sharing the costs by the state and local governments as reflected by the amount of normative support did not change much: the percentage covered by normative support somewhat decreased in 1997 and in 1998 and increased again in 1999. In 1999 normative support covered an average of 51.2% of public education expenditures (Table 3.2).

The amount of normative support per student is also affected by the actual number of pupils. As opposed to previous years' trends, in the scholastic year of 1998/99 the number of primary school pupils increased, while there was a decrease of secondary school students, with the ongoing structural changes. The noticeable drop in the number of technical school students in the 1996-1998 period was not compensated for by the increase in the number of secondary school students. As a result, the per student costs in secondary education increased considerably, although to a lesser extent than in primary education. The two main reasons of the increase in costs were the structural transformation of education – primarily the increasing number of students enrolling in secondary vocational schools – and the extended period of training and increased number of theoretical classes.

### 3.4 NEW ELEMENTS IN FUNDING

The 1996 Amendment to the funding provisions of the Public Education Act introduced new guarantees. The annual normative support given to local governments was calculated on the basis of public education expenditures of the local government in the previous year (at the time in question this amount is 80%). An additional, earmarked support was introduced for the nursery and school education of children belonging to ethnic minorities and also to schools with two languages of instruction. A new element in the system is the centrally allocated amounts that are earmarked for the development and renewal of public education, the establishment of a computer network, in-service teacher training, the new system of post-professional examination and pedagogical services and pedagogical service providers.

With the new government taking office in 1998, considerable adjustments were made in the funding system in order to increase efficiency and to meet the objectives of the educational policy. More emphasis was laid on sector-independent funding, new guarantees were introduced to give equal opportunities to local governments maintaining schools and earmarked funds were more closely associated with the objectives of the government.

In 2000 the minimal normative support given to local governments was increased from 80% to 90% of the expenditure of the previous year, which meant a new, stronger guarantee of the budget. This adjustment increased total normative support by HUF 30 billion. At the same time the amount of subsidies earmarked for professional development and quality improvement of local and regional services also increased.

In order to compensate for social inequalities a new normative support was introduced to cover the costs of extra care taken of underprivileged students (totalling approx. HUF 3 billion in 2000) encouraging compensation classes. A part of this is the considerably increased amount in the budget allocated for purchasing textbooks by students: this amount was 26% higher in 2000 than before.

Between 1992 and 1999 the normative state support of public education institutions maintained by other organisations (not local governments or the state) increased more than tenfold. The 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act considerably transformed the system of subsidies for public education institutions maintained by other organisations than local governments or the state. The majority of expenses is covered by the budget in a sector-independent manner. The situation is even better in the case of church-affiliated schools, since they are reimbursed for the total average amount spent on public education by local governments in the previous year. An important change introduced in September of 1999 is that even the second diploma of non-primary education can be received without paying tuition fees.

A significant change is the extended scope of public funds on the county level and in Budapest. The multilateral boards of trustees of these funds may now decide in matters and allocate funds in more cases of professional development.

The most radical changes affecting local education and teacher employment are related to the increased number of students' classes: an average of 1.5 more classes per week. Curricular changes may have financial effects in the long run, as well as the new funding for out-of-class activities for students with special needs.

The planned development and the badly needed new system of funding in vocational education seems to be feasible only on the long run. The reason for this is that a uniform, normative way of funding does not serve the objective of providing equal opportunities in this type of school. Local governments, on the other hand, find it more and more difficult to fund vocational education.

In 1999 local governments spent somewhat more than a quarter of their current expenditure on education (Table 3.3). Another characteristic feature of recent times is the increased proportion of centralised subsidies: this form of support did not exist in the early nineties, while its proportion in 1999 was as high as 8.4% of all public education expenditures by local governments. Local governments had to find other sources to pay for the difference between the amount of normative support and the actual expenditure. As a result, the situation of education in terms of the budget was more and more dependent on the financial situation of individual local governments.

*Table 3.3*

*The percentage of education expenditure within the total expenditure of local governments, 1994-1999 (%)*

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Current expenditure	71.0	73.0	71.1	67.0	67.5	70.4
Educational expenditure within current expenditure	26.9	26.9	26.2	24.4	24.6	25.5
Total developmental expenditure	19.5	14.4	15.3	18.0	20.1	17.1
Educational expenditure with in developmental expenditure	2.8	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8
Other expenditure	9.5	12.6	13.6	15.0	12.4	12.5
Total expenditure	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Finance

The significant increase in the normative support of public education was paralleled to a re-allocation of subsidies among local governments. Poor settlements found themselves in a more advantageous situation, rich settlements (generally towns) found that their current situation was less favourable than before. Local governments maintaining many schools (small towns) may find it more difficult to finance public education institutions. At the same time, the role of earmarked subsidies has become more prominent in funding.

As for the relative proportion of personal expenses and material expenses, in the 1994-1998 period material expenses increased by a mere 22.7% in nominal value, which is in fact a serious decrease in real value. At the same time the proportional expenditure on salaries in the late nineties was as high as 80% (Table 3.4).

Companies are now playing a more significant role in funding vocational training. All companies have to pay an amount of 1.5% of all wages to support vocational training, and some of this (0.2 % in 1996 and 0.5 in 1999) may be spent on training their own employees. Companies supported vocational training with HUF 27 billion in 1997 and HUF 30 billion in 1998. In these two years an annual HUF 15-20 billion went directly to vocational schools and approximately 10 billion was accumulated in an earmarked fund. Based on the recommendations of the National Council for Vocational Training, the fund supported vocational training in a decentralised form with HUF 2.3 billion in 1997 and HUF 2.65 billion in 1998, distributed to counties according to the number of students.

Hungarian public education has serious efficiency problems. Under the current conditions there are in fact no opportunities for economies of scale. 70% of Hungarian local governmental educational tasks (especially in those communities with a population of 2000 or less) – partly undertaken on a voluntary basis – put a limit on size efficiency. Still, the number of schools jointly maintained by two or more local governments has not grown.

*Table 3.4*

*The percentage of expenditure on salaries in current educational layout broken down according to school types, 1990–1999*

Year	Nursery school	Primary school*	General secondary school*	Secondary vocational school*	Vocational training school
1990	66.6	77.6	77.0	73.5	74.1
1991	67.1	76.5	77.2	74.7	73.4
1992	65.8	74.4	74.1	72.7	70.0
1993	68.6	76.5	75.2	73.0	73.2
1994	70.8	77.9	76.8	75.1	69.8
1995	73.2	82.6	80.0	78.2	72.2
1996	70.0	76.6	71.6	65.4	63.1
1997	73.5		83.5		67.7
1998	74.0		83.4		68.3
1999	72.0		84.0		74.1

Source: Ministry of Education

\* Calculated jointly since 1997

In international comparison the teacher per student ratio, one indicator of efficiency, has been rather poor for years. In OECD countries the student per teacher ratio was 17.1 in primary schools and 14.9 in lower secondary schools in 1998. In Hungary these figures were much lower, 11 and 11.1, respectively (Education at a Glance, 2000).

With the small number of obligatory classes taught by teachers and the relatively high number of teachers it is still unlikely that the budget will be able to provide for higher real incomes for teachers. The unchanging number of teachers, combined with a decrease in educational tasks, will keep teachers salaries low. The price of safe employment is the fact that teachers have become the worst paid intellectuals in the nineties. Hungarian primary education requires far too much labour by international standards, resulting in a high proportion of expenditure depending on the number of teachers, both in relation to education-specific and total expenditure.

# Chapter 4

## The Educational System and Student Flows

### 4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUNGARIAN SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Compulsory schooling in Hungary lasts from 6 to 16/18 years of age. (The legal regulations allow for the differentiated beginning of school between ages 5 and 7). The 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act extended the end of compulsory schooling to the age of 18, but only starting with those who enter primary school in the 1998/99 school year. In the scholastic year 1998/99 75% of the 17-year-old and 63% of 18-year-old population were students (Table 4.1). Children can satisfy the requirement of compulsory schooling by attending educational institutions at the primary and secondary levels.

*Table 4.1*

*The number of participants in school-based public education according to school type and age*

Age	Nursery schools	Primary school (1–8)	Special school (1–8)	Technical school (1–3)	General secondary and vocational school	Higher education	Total in full-time training	Evening and distance training	Total	Students in full-time training	Total number of students
										in the percentage of the age group	
5	111 004	861	346	–	–	–	112 211	–	112 211		
6	85 087	43 389	1 224	–	–	–	129 700	–	129 700		
7	2484	109 450	2 709	–	–	–	114 643	–	114 643		
8	–	120 122	3 595	–	–	–	123 717	–	123 717		
9	–	118 107	4 040	–	–	–	122 147	–	122 147		
10	–	117 973	4 419	–	–	–	122 392	–	122 392		
11	–	119 570	4 589	–	–	–	124 159	–	124 159		
12	–	120 462	4 641	–	–	–	125 103	–	125 103	99.4	99.4
13	–	117 722	4 551	491	1721	–	124 485	–	124 485	97.9	97.9
14	–	74 824	4 252	9150	31 348	–	119 574	–	119 574	99.0	99.0
15	–	15 879	3 538	25 367	73 066	–	117 850	58	117 908	95.8	95.9
16	–	4806	2 594	34 083	77 435	–	118 918	628	119 546	92.0	92.5
17	–	–	1 501	25 722	73 274	–	100 497	3 527	104 024	72.9	75.4
18	–	–	850	12 650	54 566	14 023	82 089	8 219	90 308	57.2	62.9
19	–	–	443	7286	28 437	27 202	63 368	12 224	75 592	41.0	49.0
20	–	–	309	4647	14 357	30 785	50 098	14 380	64 478	31.0	39.9

Source: Ministry of Education, educational statistics; KSH, Demographic Yearbook, 1998, and the calculations of András Sugár  
NB: The students in the 4th to 8th grades of six and eight-grade general secondary schools are listed as primary school students.

Adult education only refers to the education of adults within the formal system.

The rate compared to age groups is an estimate and thus might be distorted by several factors.



The system of Hungarian school education has been under review for many years. The structure of the eight-grade general school and the consecutive 3 or 4 years of secondary education established in most socialist countries of Europe after 1945, started to come under scrutiny after 1990, when the autonomy of the local and the institutional levels increased and the educational monopoly of the state was abolished. The 1993 Public Education Act already reflected the changing school structure. As a consequence, the definitions of primary schooling and secondary schooling were modified and the formerly firm division between general and vocational secondary education disappeared.

It is important to emphasise that the transformation of the Hungarian school system is not controlled by the state, nor is it the product of far-reaching, central strategic decisions. It has basically taken place as the result of numerous, small-scale efforts at the local and institutional levels. The most important demographic reason for the structural changes in secondary education is the decline in the number of pupils who leave the general secondary school. Between 1989 and 1996 the number of general secondary school-leavers dropped from 171 thousand to 120 thousand and the schools had to make great efforts to ensure the pupil numbers that would allow for the continuation of their operation. The important administrative reason for the changes is that decision-making on pupil enrolment and on the determination of the educational profiles is allocated to the local, maintainer level. The factors mentioned so far have been further strengthened by the financing system of education, which makes the support of institutions mainly dependent on the number of pupils. Due to the special interaction and the parallel timing of these factors the educational institutions have found themselves in a hitherto unknown field of competition, where they have to exploit every means available to ensure an appropriate number of pupils so that they can continue their operation and maintain their number of teaching posts.

The figure on page 41 illustrates the structure of Hungarian education. The forms of training shown on the figure represents educational programmes that can operate within one institution rather than school types. General secondary education, the so called 'gimnázium' (4 to 8 years of education) mainly prepares students for the continuation of studies in higher education, and they have to take the secondary school-leaving examination at the end of schooling. Secondary vocational education (4 to 6 years) prepares students either for entering the labour market or higher education, which means they can take the vocational exam and the school-leaving exam – the latter entitles them to go on to tertiary level – at the same time. Vocational training school programmes (4 years) train students to become skilled workers for the labour market, and grant a vocational certificate.

### *Vertical Changes in the Structure of the Educational System*

After 1990, the most significant vertical development was the introduction of six and eight-grade general secondary schools (Table 4.2 on page 42). The 1990 Amendment to the 1985 Education Act authorised six and eight-year general secondary education. The number of students attending these secondary schools grew dynamically until 1996, and has kept increasing to a smaller degree since. In particular, the permeation of eight-grade general secondary schools has slowed down and practically stagnated since 1997. The expansion of general secondary schools that altered their structure made the system less transparent, and created different pedagogical, organisational and financing difficulties.



# *The structure of the Hungarian education system and the student flows*

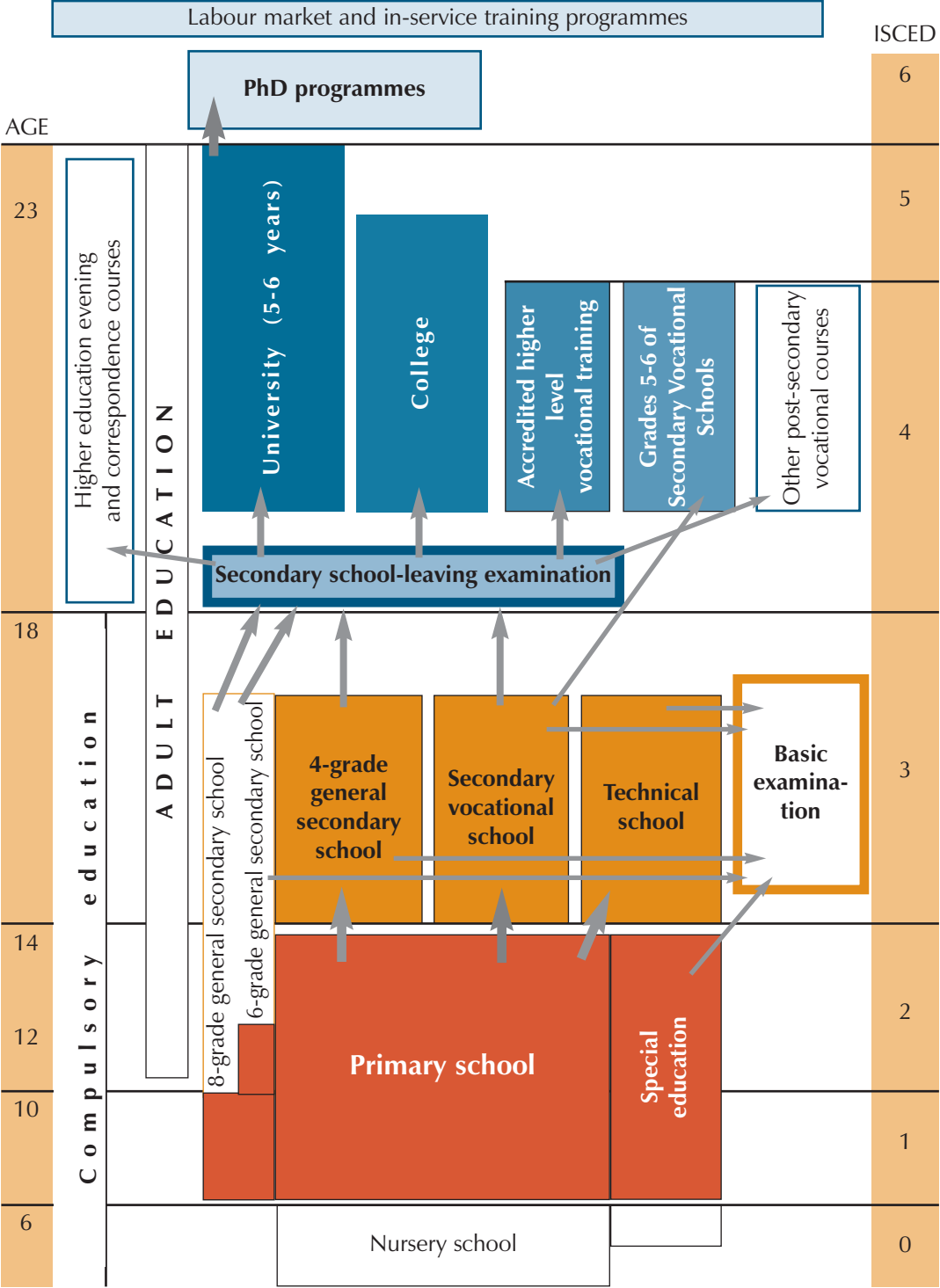


Table 4.2

*The number of pupils and classes of six- and eight-grade general secondary schools at grades 5-8, 1991/92-1999/2000*

	Number of schools	Number of pupils at grades					Number of classes at grades				
		5.	6.	7.	8.	Total	5.	6.	7.	8.	Total
<b>1991/92</b>											
Six-grade	21	–	–	nd	nd	nd	–	–	nd	nd	nd
Eight-grade	45	1 621	538	nd	nd	nd	55	18	nd	nd	nd
Total	–	1 621	538	1 186	416	3 761	55	18	39	13	125
<b>1992/93</b>											
Six-grade	54	–	–	2 254	1 089	3 343	–	–	74	29	103
Eight-grade	47	1 746	1 341	533	113	3 733	60	48	18	4	130
Total	–	1 746	1 341	2 787	1 202	7 076	60	48	92	33	233
<b>1993/94</b>											
Six-grade	86	–	–	3 317	1 978	5 295	–	–	113	66	179
Eight-grade	68	2 669	1 966	1 463	572	6 670	91	69	49	20	229
Total	–	2 669	1 966	4 780	2 550	11 965	91	69	162	86	408
<b>1994/95</b>											
Six-grade	126	–	–	4 800	3 606	8 406	–	–	168	124	292
Eight-grade	88	3 363	3 004	2 248	1 584	10 199	120	103	79	54	356
Total	–	3 363	3 004	7 048	5 190	18 605	120	103	267	178	648
<b>1995/96</b>											
Six-grade	150	–	–	5 717	5 138	10 855	–	–	196	179	375
Eight-grade	97	3 727	3 461	3 058	2 218	12 464	128	123	105	78	434
Total	–	3 727	3 461	8 775	7 356	23 319	128	123	301	257	809
<b>1996/97</b>											
Six-grade	168	–	–	6 110	5 697	1 1807	–	–	210	195	405
Eight-grade	99	4 029	3 750	3 506	3 030	14 315	136	128	123	105	492
Total	–	4 029	3 750	9 616	8 727	26122	136	128	333	300	897
<b>1997/98</b>											
Six-grade	173	–	–	6 392	6 073	1 2465	–	–	225	210	435
Eight-grade	103	3 854	4 094	3 766	3 526	15 240	135	138	128	125	526
Total	–	3 854	4 094	10 158	9 599	27 705	135	138	353	335	961
<b>1998/99</b>											
Six-grade	188	–	–	7 242	6 580	13 822	–	–	253	232	485
Eight-grade	106	4 033	3 913	4 051	3 754	15 751	140	137	138	131	546
Total	–	4 033	3 913	11 293	10 334	29 573	140	137	391	363	1 031
<b>1999/2000</b>											
Six-grade	191	–	–	7 015	7 346	14 361	–	–	243	254	497
Eight-grade	106	3 986	4 038	3 869	4 028	15 921	138	139	135	138	550
Total	–	3 986	4 038	10 884	11 374	30 282	138	139	378	392	1 047

Source: Ministry of Education, educational statistics; data on 1999/2000 by Tibor Könyvesi

The legislative changes, realised through the National Core Curriculum (NAT) and the 1993 Public Education Act, were aimed at directing the structural development of schools towards the extension of general education to 10 years. The 1996 Amendment worked along the same lines, but instead of extending primary education, it made the ninth and tenth grades provide

general education. In regards to these two forms, the most significant changes in vocational education were brought about by the introduction of the National Training Register (OKJ) and the National Core Curriculum, by prolonging general education and by the extension of vocational education to over 16 years of age. From the scholastic year of 1998/1999 on, vocational training in the professions listed in the OKJ may only begin after the completion of compulsory education. As a result, students attending ninth and tenth grades in schools which do not grant the secondary school-leaving certificate are also instructed in subjects that provide the basis for general education. The content of the syllabus is laid down in the requirements of the NAT and frame curricula.

As a consequence of vertical changes, the length of each training period changed: the length of primary education shrank from 8 years to 4 or 6 in the case of certain student groups, elsewhere it grew to 10 years, and secondary education increased from 4 years to 6 or 8, whereas in other places it shortened. The 1999 Amendment not only changed the objectives and the division of learning periods of the various forms of training, but often their content, as well. This Amendment intended to reinforce the previous 8-plus-4-year model. It discontinued the unified preparatory period which lasted from the first up to the tenth grade. The certificate for general education is not received after taking the basic exam at the end of the tenth grade, but is given if one succeeds in completing the eighth grade. The period of secondary education begins in the 9th grade, whilst in the ninth and tenth grade, apart from education and pedagogy basically aiming at establishing the level of general literacy, there is the opportunity to develop the abilities which make it easier for pupils to enter technical training.

In addition, the 1999 Amendment made the definition of technical school more exact. It declares that technical schools have a 9th and a 10th grade and at least two years of additional technical training. This raised the length of skilled worker training in vocational training schools from three to four years. Prior to the Amendment, general training programmes for the ninth and tenth grades could be set up by both eight-grade primary and secondary schools, and the maintaining local governments assigned this duty to vocational training schools in most of the settlements. The rate of underprivileged students is typically high (20-25%) in these schools, therefore the obligation to change the structure quickly caused serious tensions. The fact that in the ninth grade, instead of technical training, schools could only teach technical knowledge in the form of career-orientation, resulted in significant changes. One may enter technical training at several stages: (1) after taking the general certificate for primary education at 16, (2) after completing the 10th grade, (3) after completing the final year of secondary school which prepares for the school-leaving exam, and (4) after taking the school-leaving exam. The vertical changes of school structure are also influenced by the organisation of the 13th and 14th grades for general secondary and secondary vocational school-leavers (Table 4.3).

*Table 4.3*

*The changing number of students in the 13th grade or above in secondary vocational schools, 1995/96–1999/2000*

School-year	Number of students	Increase (previous year = 100%)	Increase (1995/96 = 100%)
1995/96	24 132	100.0	100.0
1996/97	33 271	137.9	137.9
1997/98	39 398	118.4	163.3
1998/99	46 230	117.3	191.6
1999/00	50 199	108.6	208.0

Source: Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Education, calculations of Erika Garami

It is due to this development that the increase in the total number of students in secondary schools which prepare them for the school-leaving exam is almost exclusively connected to the growing number of students who take part in technical training after the exam.

In order to avoid youth unemployment, thirteenth grades in secondary schools offer training in the form of optional programmes which improve the chance of employment or which grant opportunities for temporary jobs. The most frequently offered options are the development of competence in foreign languages, ICT skills, tourism and motoring. In order to avoid the unemployment of graduating students, technical training institutions have extended their scope towards higher levels, i.e. they have introduced vocational and technology classes, and the scope of technical training institutions very often includes short vocational, vocational, post-vocational and technological training.

### *Horizontal Changes in the Structure of the Educational System*

One of the most important drives behind the horizontal changes that have taken place in the system of public education was the expansion of secondary schools which offer secondary school-leaving certificates. The unexpectedly rapid increase in the number of regular students in these secondary institutions began in the second part of the eighties. Since the size of the population grew, as well, relatively speaking, student numbers stagnated.

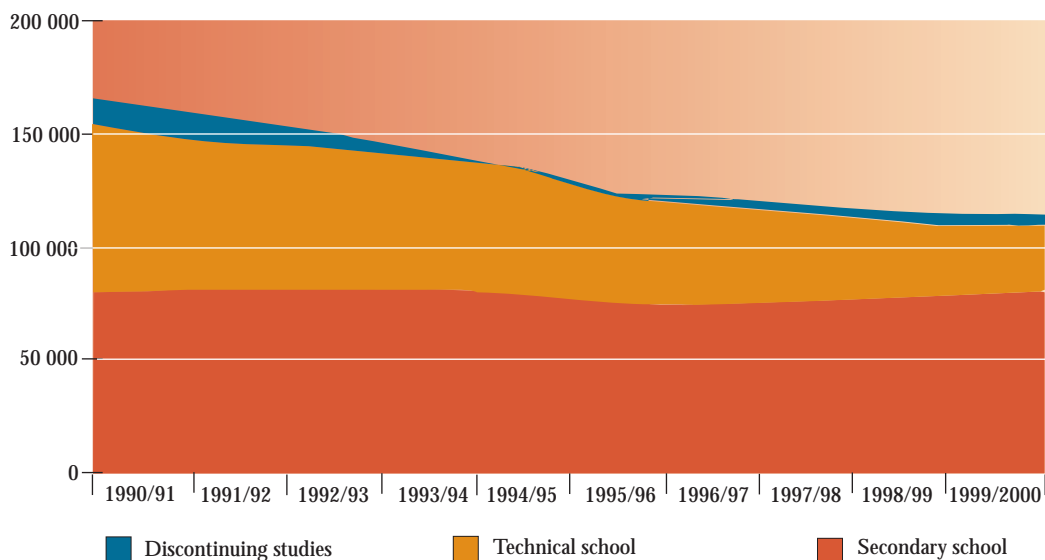
From the nineties on, the number of students entering secondary education has hardly changed, however, as a result of the steady decrease in the student population since the beginning of the nineties, schooling rates have leaped: that of general secondary schools rose from 20% to 32% between 1989/90 and 1999/2000, and that of secondary vocational schools from 27% to 39%. After 1996/97, the rate of students leaving education after primary school has begun to rise, a possible reason for this is the repression of special short vocational schools, which left a certain segment of students without appropriate options for further studies after primary level (Fig. 4.1 and Table 4.4). Simultaneously, the number of students entering vocational training school training has considerably dropped.

As a result of the re-structuring process, more than 75% of students going on to secondary education within each generation applied to secondary schools at the end of the nineties (Table 4.5 on page 46). Within the group of students entering secondary school, little more than one-third (37.8%) went on to schools offering general training, and nearly two-thirds (62.2%) to schools which give technical training. In regards to the total number of students, the growth is primarily experienced in vocational secondary education, and less so in general secondary education. The spectacular expansion of secondary schools can be accounted for by the increase of the number and the rate of students taking the school leaving certificate. Although the number of students admitted into secondary schools stagnated in the absolute sense in the early nineties, the number of students who passed secondary school-leaving examination four years later and their rate compared to the size of the 18-year-old population have both showed an almost constant increase.

In 1995, practically every student enrolled for secondary school succeeded in taking the secondary school-leaving certificate. This goes to show that the certificate for secondary education is becoming more and more essential and everyone aims for taking it.

As a part of horizontal changes, on the other side the number of vocational training school students has decreased significantly (from 42% in the 1990/91 school-year to 23% in 1999/2000).

*Figure 4.1*  
*The number of students going on to secondary and technical school after leaving primary education, 1990/91–1999/2000*



Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary) 1999/2000

NB: Secondary school: general secondary and secondary vocational school

Technical school: vocational training schools, schools for typing and stenography, special short vocational training schools

*Table 4.4*  
*The number of primary school-leavers and students who continue their studies after primary education, 1985/86–1999/2000*

School-year	Completed 8 grades (students)	General secondary school (%)	Secondary vocational school (%)	Vocational training school (%)	Short vocational school		Special short vocational school (%)	Total % of students continuing education
					for typing and stenography (%)	for health care (%)		
1985/86	130 992	20.8	26.0	43.8	1.4	1.4	–	93.6
1986/87	131 219	20.7	27.0	43.5	1.7	1.3	–	94.2
1987/88	134 223	21.1	26.7	44.2	1.4	1.4	–	94.8
1988/89	149 640	20.1	27.4	44.5	1.6	1.4	–	95.0
1989/90	170 891	20.4	27.0	42.7	1.7	1.5	–	93.3
1990/91	164 616	21.1	27.5	42.0	1.6	1.3	nd	93.4
1991/92	158 912	21.6	28.9	39.2	1.3	0.9	nd	91.9
1992/93	151 295	23.3	30.1	36.6	1.0	0.8	3.9	95.7
1993/94	144 203	24.2	31.8	35.5	0.9	0.6	4.5	97.5
1994/95	136 900	25.7	32.6	35.2		5.3		98.8
1995/96	122 359	27.1	33.7	34.2		4.3		99.3
1996/97	120 561	27.2	34.4	31.9		3.6		97.1
1997/98	116 711	29.0	35.5	30.8		2.6		97.9
1998/99	113 654	30.7	38.0	24.6		2.5		95.8
1999/00	114 302	31.6	39.0	22.9		2.4		95.9

Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary) 1999/2000

*Table 4.5**The number of students at secondary level in each programme, 1985/86 – 1999/2000*

School-year	General secondary school	Secondary vocational school	Vocational training school	Short vocational school for		Special short vocational training s. (%)	Total
				typing and stenography (%)	health care (%)		
1985/86	105 794	130 155	176 380	7 751	5 491		425 571
1986/87	105 194	131 517	175 228	7 744	5 279		424 932
1987/88	105 976	133 618	177 191	7 378	5 414		429 577
1988/89	108 440	139 740	186 796	7 343	5 645		447 964
1989/90	116 317	157 075	201 702	6 794	6 531		488 419
1990/91	123 425	168 352	209 371	6 231	6 549	684	514 612
1991/92	130 378	178 911	204 655	5 404	6 261	6 062	531 671
1992/93	136 729	186 183	188 570	4 281	5 158	14 284	535 205
1993/94	138 198	192 388	174 187	3 494	4 224	17 298	529 789
1994/95	140 352	196 965	163 330	3 017	3 290	16 338	523 292
1995/96	140 884	208 415	154 294	2 267	2 054	13 984	521 898
1996/97	140 867	220 528	143 800	1 870	1 067	11 624	519 756
1997/98	141 402	227 243	132 637	1 238	726	9 310	512 556
1998/99	142 196	234 430	119 727	863	368	7 245	504 829
1999/00	145 210	241 369	109 534	651	327	6 526	503 617

Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary) 1999/2000

As a result of the horizontal structural changes that have taken place, a large proportion of secondary institutions guarantee several educational programmes for students at the same time from the 9th to the 12th grade, but often the organisation of 13th and 14th grades also means a horizontal as well as vertical change in the training structure of institutions. As a consequence of overlapping horizontal and vertical changes, a general secondary school sector evolved from secondary schools with a mixed profile, based on technical schools, whose schooling requirements and performance are significantly lower than those characteristic of single-profile general secondary schools. The changes and the growing rate of mixed-profile institutions further blurs the dividing line between general and vocational education on the whole.

### *The Transformation of the Structure of Vocational Education*

Since the early nineties, the structure of vocational education, built on different kinds of preliminary training and giving qualifications on different levels, has undergone rapid development. On the system level, its structure in the recent years has been affected primarily by the Public Education Act, the Higher Education Act, the Amendments made to these, and by the introduction of the OKJ and the NAT. At the moment, the liberalisation of fixed schooling routes, the considerable extension of general secondary education, and the adjustment of vocational education to secondary and post-secondary levels are under way. This process includes the gradual reduction and disappearance of the 3-year skilled-worker training in vocational training schools, its transformation into 4-year programmes, the long-term spread of secondary vocational schools, and the diffusion of the new model for vocational education (a two-year general education, two years of technical preparatory training, and one or two years of specialisation). The OKJ receives the most criticism for the high number of professions, and the fundamental reformation began only recently. If training programmes would appear as registered in

the OKJ, it would impose a challenge for vocational education, since competition may evolve between extra-curricular and school-based training. In the fields of economics, ICT and health care, practically the whole of post-secondary vocational education is based on the OKJ, whereas in industrial, technological and agricultural training, the number of students applying to registered programmes is still below 50%.

### *Post-secondary Training*

The system of accredited higher level vocational training, introduced in 1998, opened up new perspectives in the field of vocational education. Besides increasing the chances of finding employment on the market, its aim is to guarantee the acquisition of acknowledged credits in higher vocational training for those students who wish to continue their studies in the 'official' higher education. One of the basic requirements for this form of training is to meet the needs of the economy, and to ensure the cooperation of market representatives throughout the process: from the goal-setting phase, through establishing the internal percentage of curriculum-content, to the actual organisation of the training.

Besides, the creation of post-secondary training had important educational policy reasons: the extension and democratic transformation of higher level training, and the aim to make it more practical. The training is a part of higher education, and it cannot be launched without being initially accredited as a higher education programme. At the same time, it is part and parcel of the vocational training system, and subject to the legal regulations of vocational education.

Accredited higher level vocational training may be organised in two institutional types on higher levels in the education system: in higher educational institutions and vocational schools – however, the content and exit requirements of the training are uniform. Participants receive the OKJ certificate, and this qualification enables them to find a job on the labour market as higher qualified workers. If the student was to enrol in higher education, some courses may be accepted at the appropriate credit value. Vocational schools may only introduce the training if they previously sign an agreement with a higher educational institution that is appropriate for the line of training concerned and willing to cooperate.

### *Second Chance for Dropouts*

The flexibility of educational systems is the possibility for students to move between schools, programmes and training levels. The 1993 Public Education Act includes a paragraph on the right of students to continue their studies without having to take supplementary exams or complete a year's study for a second time, even if there is no institution operating at their permanent residence which would ensure school education until the end of compulsory attendance. As a result of the structural changes in the past years, the flexibility of the educational system has worsened on the one hand, because of vertical changes, but on the other hand it has improved due to horizontal changes, which increased mobility within institutions and developed new options for correction. For students dropping out of the educational system, a new opportunity is provided by the adult education system. This system copies school structure, and can be regarded as a second channel to the public education system. In addition, its objective is to give a second chance and achieve correction, but in the nineties it also performed the function of venting structural tension and preventing unemployment ('parking').



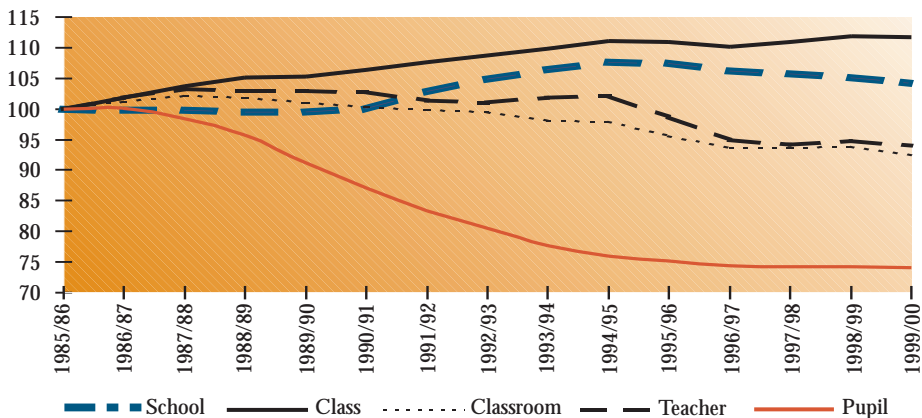
## 4.2 THE LEVELS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The levels of public education are: pre-school education, primary and secondary education. Pre-school education is a part of public education, since nursery school attendance is compulsory from the age of 5. Primary education in fact includes the level termed lower-secondary in Western-Europe (this corresponds to the 5th-8th grades in Hungary), but the ninth and tenth grades may also be included, as the nature of these is mostly to offer general education which builds on previous periods.

### *Pre-school Education (ISCED level 0)*

The nursery school period of public education concerns children from the age of 3 up to the stage of development necessary for schooling. Pre-school education may begin at the age of three, but is compulsory from 5 when children are obliged to take part in preparatory sessions for school life. The rate of children attending nursery school at 5 exceeds 95 percent. If the child achieves the level of development needed for schooling, he/she will have to enrol in primary school in the calendar year when he turns 6 before 31 May. The population of nursery school-ing-age has gradually decreased since 1996, but there are fewer available places than children. Eighty to ninety percent of under five-year-olds attend nursery school, but their rate varies greatly between settlements. While the number of children attending nursery school shows a declining trend, together with the number of available places in the past years, the rate of children enrolled at nursery school has risen moderately (by 1%) within the nursery age group. The operational conditions of institutions vary, and a wide range of structural variations have developed in the country in the case of nursery schools as well. Due to cost-effectiveness, nursery schools, and sometimes nursery and primary schools, maintained by local governments have been merged. This process began to accelerate in the summer of 1999, and consequently, nursery schools have become subsidiaries to and integrated into large organisations of single management. The number of teachers dropped in the early nineties has stagnated since, however, the number of nursery schools has been stable throughout the period.

*Figure 4.2*  
*Key trends in primary school education, 1985/86–1999/2000*



Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

### *Primary Education (ISCED levels 1 and 2)*

The number of primary schools changed little in the eighties, yet began rising in the nineties and halted in 1995/96, since then the number of schools has dropped slightly (Fig. 4.2 and Table 4.6).

*Table 4.6*

*Key data in primary school education, 1985/86–1999/2000*

School-year	School	Classroom	Class	Teacher	Pupil
1985/86	3 546	43 800	48 610	88 066	1 297 818
1986/87	3 540	44 597	49 213	89 611	1 299 455
1987/88	3 540	45 409	49 622	90 925	1 277 257
1988/89	3 526	46 045	49 509	90 620	1 242 672
1989/90	3 527	46 146	49 112	90 602	1 183 573
1990/91	3 548	46 580	48 729	90 511	1 130 656
1991/92	3 641	47 121	48 497	89 276	1 081 213
1992/93	3 717	47 594	48 330	88 917	1 044 164
1993/94	3 771	48 148	47 676	89 655	1 009 416
1994/95	3 814	48 677	47 578	89 939	985 291
1995/96	3 809	48 615	46 425	86 891	974 806
1996/97	3 765	48 231	45 521	83 658	965 998
1997/98	3 750	48 592	45 495	82 904	963 997
1998/99	3 732	48 981	45 589	83 404	964 248
1999/00	3 696	48 930	44 956	82 829	960 601

Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

Still, in 1999 there were 4.2% more schools operating than in 1985. The number of classes has been on the decline since 1988/89, that of students since 1987/88, and in September 1999 there were 26% less students than 15 years before. The number of teachers still rose significantly in 1987/88, totalling around 90 thousand, but decreased considerably in 1995/96 and 1996/97. In 1999/2000 teacher numbers were 6% less than in the 1985/86 school year. As a consequence of the demographic decline, the important indicators for primary schools have shown a significant tendency towards more intensive education in the past 15 years. The number of school classes per classroom fell below one, and student numbers significantly dropped regarding all bases for projection. The improvement of specific indicators practically stopped in the 1995/96 school year. The average school size was 260 students per school in 1999/2000, but in more than half of the schools the student number is below 200. Undivided – one-room – education is less and less typical of small-size schools, they rather tend to operate in divided or partially divided grades (Table 4.7).

*Table 4.7*

*The number of primary schools according to management and characteristic feature, 1990/91–1999/2000*

School-year	Characteristic feature of school			Management		
	divided	partially divided	undivided	independent	shared	not independent
1990/91	2 952	154	442	2 617	328	603
1991/92	3 034	167	440	2 941	322	378
1992/93	3 106	193	418	3 033	360	324
1993/94	3 185	174	412	3 107	383	281
1994/95	3 218	202	394	3 152	417	245
1995/96	3 215	202	392	3 115	476	218
1996/97	3 184	205	376	3 130	511	215
1997/98	3 188	218	344	2 952	601	197
1998/99	3 193	216	323	2 930	620	182
1999/00	3 168	201	327	2 901	619	176

Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; 1999/2000: calculations of Mrs László Szalay

### **Characteristic Features of Progress from one School Year to Another**

The rate of students staying in a grade for a second time is higher in the 1st, 5th and 6th grades, and the lowest in the 8th year. Until the mid-nineties the rate of second-timers decreased slightly in most years, i.e. some increase in efficiency could be deduced (as a result of falling student numbers). In the last three years their rate has become stable, and no further improvement took place.

The most important indicator for drop-outs is the rate of students who fail to complete their studies within the age limit of compulsory attendance. In the early nineties this area also displayed slight improvement. Whereas in 1990/91 6.1% of 16-year olds failed to complete primary school, the same rate was 3.5% in 1996/97, and only 2.2% in 1999. The annual drop-out rate also decreased during the nineties, but this trend has slowed down in the past years.

### **Further Education after Primary School**

Admission into secondary level institutions is possible at several points due to changes that have taken place in the past years: at the age of 10, 12 and 14. As a result of the evolving competition between schools, entry tests, which previously characterised institutions with special educational offers, have become widespread regardless of the educational programme. The spread of entrance exams was made possible by authorising school managers to decide on admission at their own discretion. The 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act considerably restricted the school's freedom of decision in this area. New regulations have also been introduced regarding further education after the eighth grade. According to these regulations, from the year 2000 admission into secondary institutions is conducted through a new central information system, which creates the pre-requisites for the adoption of uniform evaluation standards and practices during the entrance procedure.

### **Options for Correction**

Primary education for adults, besides the instruction of adult students, has been focusing more and more on meeting the special educational needs of younger age groups. By the eighties the so-called schools for workers have become the pool for children of the socially underprivileged. According to regulations, students may only continue their primary studies in the framework of adult education after turning 17. In the nineties, institutions for the primary education of adults have run afoul of the cost-reduction policies of local governments struggling with financial problems. Their number and the number of adults enrolled have both constantly and dramatically decreased: compared to 161 institutions and 12 528 students who had reached adulthood in 1990/91, there were less than 60 institutions with only about 3 000 students in 1999/2000.

### ***Secondary Level Education (ISCED level 3)***

The range of secondary educational programmes on offer is fairly wide; besides general secondary, vocational and technical training programmes there are also training programmes offering the possibility for correction.

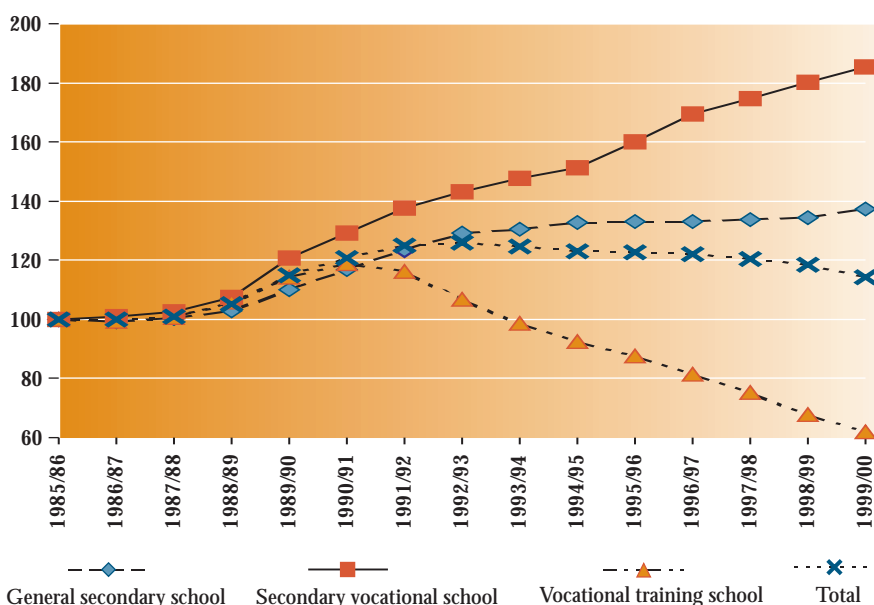
### **Secondary educational institutions**

In the 1999/2000 school year there were fifty percent more classes in general secondary schools than in 1985/86, the number of classes in secondary vocational schools has doubled, and the number of classes for vocational training, which has been on the decline since 1990/91, has fall-

en to almost half of the previous amount compared to the early nineties. Student numbers rose until 1992/93, and have been slightly decreasing since. The number of secondary vocational students has been increasing dynamically and above the average throughout, by 80% in comparison to 1985/1986. The number of students in general secondary schools (excluding general secondary school students at primary school age) was rising slightly, and although was below average in the eighties, was increasing above average in the first half of the nineties, yet then the rate came to a halt. The number of vocational training school students has dropped significantly in the nineties: after 1993/94 it remained below the 1985/86 rate. The number of short vocational training school students also decreased considerably (Fig. 4.3).

*Figure 4.3*

*Trends of secondary school student numbers according to programmes, 1985/86–1999/2000*  
(19985/86 = 100%)



Source: Source: Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

The number of secondary school teachers has leaped in the past decade, but dropped in skilled-worker training. The student-per-teacher ratio has decreased in general secondary schools, whereas it has stagnated or increased in vocational institutions. From 1997/98 the student-per-teacher ratio in skilled-worker training has begun to rapidly decrease.

The gender proportion strongly varies in the different programmes. In general secondary schools the rate of boys and girls is a stable 40:60%, in vocational education a more or less stable 50:50%, and in vocational training schools the rate was two-thirds to one-third.

### **Institutions for and Students of Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

The number of students in vocational education slightly decreased by 7.1%, between the 1990/91 and 1999/2000 school years, however, the structure of training has undergone significant changes: the number of secondary vocational students in industrial, technological, eco-

nomic, trade and catering programmes has increased, whereas the rate dropped in secondary vocational schools for agricultural and health care training. The number of students in vocational schools which grant the secondary school-leaving certificate has largely increased, and that of vocational training school students fell nearly by half. As a result of pushing the age limit for the beginning of technical training over 16, and due to the instruction of OKJ-registered trades, student numbers have risen in higher grades (13th-14th), which adds up 15% of all students in vocational education. The professional structure has been completely transformed, in order to adapt to OKJ-qualifications. The number of students who previously participated mainly in technical training for typing, stenography, and health care has plummeted, but student numbers have risen in other schools, especially in schools that offer training programmes related to information technology.

Changes were the greatest in skilled-worker training. Student numbers dropped mostly in industrial trades such as the heavy and light industry and construction, however, the rate of students in catering and in the service sector increased. The transformation of the professional structure mainly required for the conditions of practical instruction to be reformed, and this has drawn considerable costs. Whereas employers give preference to applicants with work-experience, in school-based vocational training the opportunity for students to gain professional in-service experience with companies has been constantly narrowing.

The important indicators for the efficiency of education, namely the rate of second-timers in a grade and the various drop-out indicators, differ significantly in each school type. Although in the late nineties the drop-out rate has somewhat decreased in general secondary schools and declined dynamically in secondary vocational schools, the same indicator has worsened considerably in traditional skilled-worker training.

### **Options for Correction at secondary level**

As far as the drop-out rate is concerned, one of the advantages of institutions offering several programmes is that they may transfer students who fall out of training programmes of higher prestige to ones where requirements are lower 'within the premises'.

The task of educational correction at the secondary institutional level is assigned to school-based adult education. In the nineties great changes have taken place in the internal structure of the training of adults at secondary level: training programmes have attempted to meet the standards of general secondary schools. The most popular programme was the 3-year training, which is, in practice, a 2-year intensive schooling in the form of a regular educational programme, the so-called secondary vocational school for skilled labourers. The programme made it possible for approximately one-third of the students leaving skilled-worker training to enter a fully credited school programme. Compared to 1997/98, in 1999/2000 there were three and a half times more students attending evening courses, whereas a declining trend may be observed in correspondence courses. In the 1999/2000 school year new forms of evening and correspondence training have emerged.

As for the composition of classes, the average age has dropped in comparison to the seventies and eighties. More and more students with skilled-worker certificates take and pass the secondary school-leaving examination. However, more and more mixed-profile institutions are schooling their school-leavers into their own adult education forms and courses.

### **The Effect of Exit Regulations on Progress in the System**

In the Hungarian public educational system the most important exam at present, and traditionally, is the secondary school-leaving examination. At the end of the nineties almost every student who had successfully completed secondary forms took the exam. However, large-scale schooling at secondary level made the revision of the content and function of the school-leaving exam inevitable. The publication of frame curricula will probably postpone the implementation of the compulsory two-level secondary school-leaving examination until 2005. The standard two-level school-leaving exam will enable students in their final year to take the exam at different levels in each subject. They may take higher level secondary school-leaving exams in the subjects required for admission into higher education, which would replace the entrance examination. However, the option to take the exam at an intermediate or higher level will strongly differentiate student flow within secondary schools, since preparatory courses will be introduced for both intermediate and higher levels. In order to ensure this widening range of options, schools might be forced to engage in inter-institutional cooperative work. What is more, some students might even have to pursue their secondary studies in two (or more) institutions.

In the domain of vocational education, exit regulations are increasingly relying on the National Training Register (OKJ). The OKJ makes the secondary school-leaving certificate a condition of entrance into vocational training in the case of many trades. This represents a kind of motivation for taking the school-leaving exam, it boosts the expansion of secondary schools, and it strengthens the tendency towards mass application for the exam.

According to the 1996 Amendment, the 10 years of compulsory and unified general education would have had to be completed by taking the basic examination after the introduction of the NAT. However, as a result of the measures taken by the new educational government, this exam is not organically linked to the exit regulatory system anymore: the 10th grade used to represent a pedagogic division line, but the scope of frame curricula has been extended to regulate content up to the 12th grade. The current role of the basic examination may be that it enables schools to evaluate their pedagogic work against external criteria, and thus it could become integral to the quality assurance system of education.

### ***Higher Educational Systems Receiving Secondary School Graduates***

The increase of student numbers in higher education is a natural phenomenon in developed countries. Hungary has made considerable improvements in this area, as a large increase has taken place between 1990 and 1997. The rate of schooling into higher education rose by 105% in the given period. Greater increase was only achieved in Poland and Portugal during this period. The picture is even more favourable if we consider the fact that in developed countries the definition of higher education is broader than in Hungary, the length of studies is basically greater, and a large number of students fail to complete university or college.

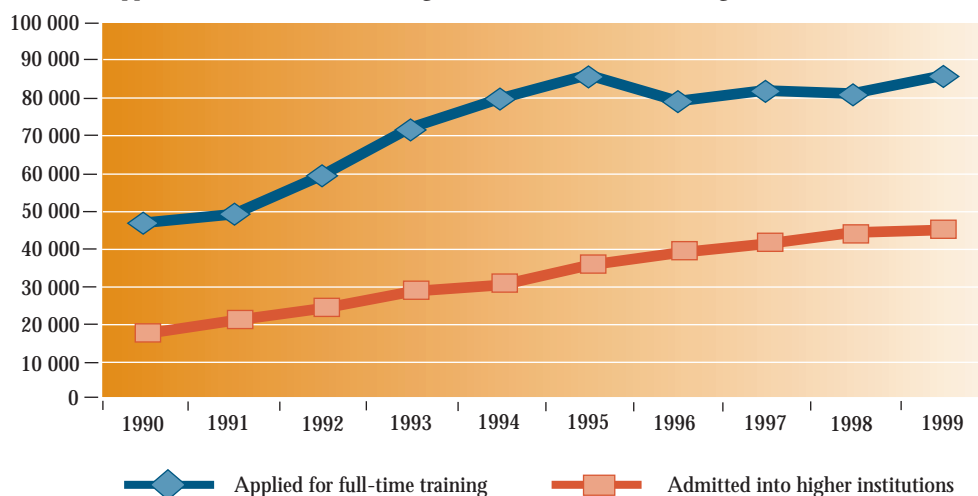
Observations show that there are significant differences between the trends of student progress in higher education in certain countries: in Hungary, for example, 77% of admitted students complete their higher level studies, and the same rate is 49% in Portugal. This draws attention to the fact that the extent to which the large-scale expansion of higher education may be financed is limited, unless it is accompanied by the development of stronger mechanisms for selection and the expansion of possibilities for leaving the system.

### The Increase of Student Numbers

Over the past 15 years the number of students entering higher education in Hungary has grown significantly. In 1999 the number of students applying for full-time training was 1.8 times the amount of the 1990 rate, while the rate of admitted students grew two and a half times (Fig. 4.4 and Table 4.8).

*Figure 4.4*

*The number of applicants for full-time training and admitted students in higher education, 1990-1999*



Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1990-1998; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

One of the reasons behind increasing student numbers may be the rapid rise in the number of students with secondary school-leaving certificates, which follows from more populous student-intakes in times of demographic rise. However, the above mentioned increase in student numbers in the early nineties went hand in hand with a 15% increase in the number of institutions (Table 4.9 on page 70). In the past five years students attended the same number of institutions, and the increase of student capacity has simultaneously slowed down. Besides the rise in prescribed capacity and the liberalisation of the admission system, the establishment of new colleges largely contributed to rising student numbers. In relation to the increase in the number of first-year students the rate of students attending higher education in the 18-22 age group has grown noticeably: whereas it was at around 10% in the early nineties, in 1998 it neared 20%. Considering students with secondary school-leaving certificates only, the indicator becomes even more favourable: whereas hardly one-third of them were admitted to universities or colleges in 1990, this rate exceeded 50% by the mid-nineties (Table 4.8).

The large-scale increase of student numbers, however, surfaces fairly differently on the levels of training and educational branches. Concerning educational branches, in the early-mid nineties the increase was especially large in the number of applicants for the faculties of arts and law, and in the case of institutions with economic, engineering and agricultural programmes. The only exceptions were teacher and nursery teacher training colleges, where the absolute number of applicants also dropped. The distribution of students in the educational branches of higher educational institutions has not changed considerably in the past 10 years. In the early



nineties, from the number of part-time students (attending evening or correspondence courses) to that of students in evening courses fell to an all-time low, regarding the post Second World War period, and only a fairly moderate increase has taken place since. In contrast, an exceptionally large increase was experienced in the attendance of correspondence courses after 1990: the number of students grew to three and a half times of the previous amount over seven years. This was mostly triggered by the permeation of the learn-and-work model, of post-graduate and retraining courses, and of the different forms of correspondence learning.

*Table 4.8*

*Total number of students taking secondary school-leaving and higher education entrance examinations, 1990–1999 (thousand people)*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Left full-time general secondary programme	24 136	24 599	26 685	31 051	31 029	31 202	32 133	32 651	33 730	32 029
Left general secondary school, total	27 241	27 541	29 265	34 217	34 413	34 620	41 359	36 427	37 749	36 267
Left secondary vocational full-time programme	28 903	29 649	32 961	37 556	37 575	39 063	41 280	42 913	43 930	41 936
Left secondary vocational school, total	40 633	40 998	42 195	46 300	45 788	49 919	51 467	53 822	53 286	50 412
Left full-time programmes, total	53 039	54 248	59 646	68 607	68 604	70 265	73 413	75 564	77 660	73 965
Students taking the secondary school-leaving exam calculated in the percentage of the population	36.9	35.9	32.8	36.2	37.9	40.4	44.5	48.7	52.7	53.6
Applied for full-time higher education	46 767	48 911	59 119	71 535	79 419	86 548	79 369	81 924	81 065	85 471
Admitted into higher education	16 818	20 338	24 022	28 008	29 787	35 081	38 382	40 922	43 629	44 538
Number of those admitted calculated in the percentage of applicants	36.0	41.6	40.6	39.2	37.5	40.5	50.0	50.0	53.8	52.1
Number of those admitted calculated in the percentage of students taking the school-leaving exam	31.7	37.5	40.3	40.8	43.4	50.0	52.3	54.1	56.2	60.2
Full-time higher education students calculated in the percentage of the population aged 18-22	10.4	11.4	12.0	12.8	14.0	15.0	16.1	16.1	19.9	17.4

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1990-1998; Ministry of Education: educational statistics; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

As a result of the large-scale increase of student numbers, the number of graduating students was growing significantly in the mid-nineties. In the 1999/2000 school year nearly 27 thousand students received their degree, which means that their number rose by more than 60% in relation to the 1990/91 school year. In comparison with educational branches, the number of students qualifying as teachers (lower primary, upper primary and secondary teacher) remains the highest, followed by students taking their degrees in technology, the humanities, economics and agriculture, respectively. Most graduates opt for college diplomas (63%).

The large-scale increase of student numbers was not followed by the satisfactory infrastructure-related development of the institutional network, therefore conditions have worsened in dormitory accommodation, which is one of the fundamental aspects of student support.

*Table 4.9*

*Main indicators of higher education, 1990/91, 1996/97–1999/2000*

	1990/91	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Number of institutions	77	89	90	89	89
Number of teachers	17 302	19 329	19 716	21 323	21 138
Full-time students (thousands)	76.6	142.1	152.9	163.2	171.5
First-year students (thousands)	22.7	44.7	45.7	48.9	51.6
Foreign students (thousands)	3.3	6.4	6.6	7.0	7.7
From all students, calculated in the percentage of the total student number:					
Grant-holders who receives other allowances (thousands)	98.9	99.2	97.2	96.3	nd
Living in student dormitory	46.8	32.1	29.5	28.0	26.5
Students per teacher (number of)	4.4	7.3	7.8	7.7	8.1
Graduated students (number of)	15 963	22 128	25 000	25 338	27 000*

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1998; KSH educational data (preliminary), 1999/2000

\* Estimated data

### Post-secondary Education and Higher Vocational Training (ISCED 4, 5)

Higher vocational training opens up perspectives for several groups of young people: on the one hand, for those who have taken their school-leaving certificates in general secondary schools, therefore do not possess a vocational qualification, and have not been admitted to university or college. As unemployed school-leavers, they can apply for the financial support for education provided by job centres, which covers the costs of the first technical training or retraining. In addition, higher vocational training enables students who completed secondary vocational school, but could not enter higher education, to master the given profession at a higher level. The training usually takes 2 years, and in most cases students have to pay a considerable tuition fee (HUF 70 000 to 100 000 per semester). One form or other of post-secondary education can also be attractive for young individuals intending to continue their studies, as these forms of education can make further studies easier due to their flexible nature. However, the rate of young individuals attending accredited higher training programmes is still insignificant. Aside from traditional higher education institutions, and within the framework of flexible post-secondary vocational training that aims to meet the actual needs of the labour market, we primarily find a range of courses that are oriented towards a practical approach. The educational programmes are largely based on new forms of education (such as distance learning), and there is clearly a strong intention to offer teaching materials which are appropriate for the individual learning of students who very often take on temporary or part-time jobs.

It was a pronounced objective of the legal provisions that higher vocational training should ensure both horizontal and vertical flexibility. Due to the effect of these legal provisions, the processes of institutionalisation in this area aim largely at broadening the traditional college-university framework, and colleges and universities with the appropriate capacity are becoming instrumental in higher technical education. In 1998 seventeen colleges and 12 universities accommodated higher level courses from this category. Another consequence is that significant regional inequalities are evolving in post-secondary training, similarly to colleges and universi-

ties; within post-secondary training, higher vocational training is also concentrated in the capital, since half of the institutions that organise these courses are located in Budapest. The regions of the countryside whose institutional network is traditionally undeveloped (e.g. the Western-Transdanubian region) seem to be underprivileged in comparison to the possibilities for higher vocational education as well.

### Factors Influencing the Continuation of Studies

Today we can see the expansion of higher education, since during the nineties the number of students has risen most remarkably. However, there are numerous forms for the continuation of studies, therefore it is not surprising that the majority of students leaving secondary programmes which traditionally do not prepare them for higher education wish to study further in one form or another. Continuing to university is the most popular with students attending six or eight-grade general secondary programmes, secondary vocational school students mainly aspire to colleges, and vocational training school students would like to obtain the secondary school-leaving certificate. Career aspirations form a hierarchy according to the different programmes, behind which also lies a fairly diverse composition of students attending these regarding their family backgrounds. The rate of higher qualification is the highest amongst the parents of students attending 6 or 8 grade general secondary schools, whereas it is the lowest amongst students of skilled-worker training.

The rates of admission into higher education are the highest in the case of students coming from general secondary schools, followed by mixed secondary and secondary vocational schools. From the group of general secondary schools the ones where education is based on a six-year curriculum stand out. The rate of students applying to higher education in relation to secondary school-leavers has been rising constantly in all institution types in the decade. Whereas 65% of general secondary school-leavers applied to higher educational institutions in 1991, the rate was 84% in 1998. This same rate rose from 25 to 34% in the case of secondary vocational schools. Although we find fairly large differences in the aspirations to higher education between general secondary and vocational students, the differences are smaller regarding the chances for admission. 54% of applicants from secondary vocational schools and 68% from general secondary schools were admitted into higher education in 1998. Concerning regional differences, the rates of the continuation are also influenced by the higher educational institutions situated in the given county. From the data on students continuing their studies from secondary schools, it can be deduced that the rate of students going on to universities of sciences is higher in counties where there is a university complex (Baranya, Hajdú-Bihar, and Csongrád Counties), whereas enrolment in colleges is high where there are no large universities (Bács-Kiskun, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, and Győr-Moson-Sopron Counties). Nevertheless, there are regions where the rate of continuation into higher education is low in all aspects, such as Nógrád, Komárom-Esztergom and Pest Counties.

## 4.3 THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Young people spend more time in the educational system than previously, and the number of those who continue their studies following compulsory attendance has increased significantly. Education policies in the nineties have encouraged the prolongation of training for different reasons. In the previous decades leaving school generally meant immediately taking up work. In contrast, today school attendance is more often followed by an inevitably or deliberately prolonged temporary period of life. At the same time, schooling strategies based on individual plans

are gaining ground, and the time-consuming transition period becomes a widely accepted and 'natural' stage in life. In Hungary, similarly to international trends, a significant number of people combine their work and studies in different ways, besides the option to take up work after leaving school.

In the period between 1992 and 1997 the rate of 15-19 year olds who attend school grew steadily, while their rate among the employed and the unemployed fell significantly, and the otherwise high rate of inactive group members slightly increased. Similar processes have taken place among young people in their early twenties (Table 4.10).

It is a noteworthy change that the rate of students among 20-24 year olds is rising, which can be related to the prolongation of schooling, and to the evolving post-secondary training system, which is expected to further increase in the future.

*Table 4.10*  
*The rate of employed individuals*  
*in the 20-24 age group*  
*compared to the total population*  
*in OECD countries, 1996*

Source: From Initial Education..., 2000

Country	Rate of employment
Switzerland	79
Denmark	74
Australia	73
Iceland	73
The Netherlands	72
New-Zealand	72
Japan	70
USA	70
Czech Republic	68
United Kingdom	67
Germany	66
Canada	65
Norway	65
Austria	64
Finland	62
Ireland	60
France	59
Korea	59
Luxembourg	59
Mexico	59
Belgium	56
Greece	55
Portugal	53
Sweden	53
Hungary	52
Turkey	48
Poland	47
Italy	40
Spain	36

## *Career Orientation and Counselling*

Career orientation and counselling are among the most important elements of the institutional system concerned with handling problems typical of the transition period, as they may contribute to harmonising demand and offer on the labour market. Career orientation is based on the work of the so-called career orientation specialists in schools, who are regular teachers commissioned to do the task besides their teaching duties. Preparation for career orientation work is not an organic part of higher-level teacher training as yet, and the majority of trainee teachers do not receive the special training required for the task. The general experience is that teachers responsible for career counselling are not well-informed about the developments of the labour market and the real possibilities which students face.

The institutional system for career-counselling maintained by the state has significantly decreased during the nineties, i.e. at a time when unemployment was at its largest. At the moment the only professional and independent career-counselling institution in the country is the Budapest Career Counselling Institution (FIPT), which was set up in 1966 and re-established after several transformations in 1991, whereas the need for this kind of counselling has considerably increased.

Institutions of the labour market (job centres, employers) are taking on an increasing role in career counselling, distributing information, and orienting students. Some job centres also undertake the training of teachers wishing to specialise in career orientation. Non-governmental organisations play a crucial role in this area. More than 300 fellow-professionals – psychologists, teachers, social workers, lawyers, mental-hygienic professionals etc. – work in youth guidance and information bureaux which operate nation-wide and are contacted by several hundred thousand young individuals annually. The completely free and accessible service seems to successfully address the age groups most concerned.

## 4.4 ADULT EDUCATION

School-based adult education is losing ground, but even in the mid-nineties one-tenth of the individuals gaining the skilled-worker certificate, nearly one-fifth of the individuals taking the secondary school-leaving examination, and nearly one-third of the individuals taking a higher level degree did so in evening and correspondence education programmes. A fairly large segment of the adult education sector is made up of school-external programmes. The statistical observation of the so-called labour-market training, which is external to the school system, is far from complete as yet, and the only data and information we have on training carried out in the place of employment come from small-scale surveys which are rather fragmented. The processes are supported by the regulation which allows one-third of the vocational training contribution (1.5% of payroll) to be spent on one's own workforce. A bill on adult education is under preparation. Once passed as an act, it is expected to introduce a transparent system of motivation that serves to reform the workforce through continuous training, similar to the practices of developed European countries.

The operation of the so-called labour-market training is mainly financed by the state, and for most of its part it aims to retrain – and provide posterior technical training for – young people freshly graduated from schools. In fact, it also performs the function of correcting and extending school-based training. The preference of active measures on the labour market is reflected by the fact that in the past years, more or less in parallel with the number of the unemployed, the number of participants in these training programmes has been continuously rising. There are fairly large training capacities available in this area, partly within the organisational structure of the labour market, and partly in a profit-oriented way. In the nineties almost a hundred thousand people have participated annually in the former, through the programmes run by the Ministry of Labour, and by the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs from 1998. The activities of educational institutions and non-profit organisations are of a considerable size, and they represent a growing capacity. At the moment about 500 to 600 organisations offer such training. According to the current legislation, organisations involved in adult education must be registered at regional job centres.

The most significant turning point of the past years in the domain of educational instruments was the appearance of the internet. The development of Hungarian correspondence learning is built on the existing higher educational system, on the National Council for Distance Learning, which has operated for years now, and on the recently established Public Foundation for Open Vocational Education. The two bodies, together with businesses interested in market training, are discovering the possibilities to expand training programmes by means of such instruments, through different projects and by using a pool of international experience. Virtual courses have appeared in Hungarian university training on an experimental level.

## 4.5 SECTORS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM NOT MAINTAINED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: CHURCH-AFFILIATED AND PRIVATE EDUCATION

Aside from institutions not maintained by local governments, the network of church affiliated, foundational and private schools has developed in Hungary on the basis of the possibilities and needs for historic traditions and due to the current social environment.

The re-introduction of church-affiliated and private schools was made possible by the regulations passed in the late eighties and early nineties. The 1989 Amendment to the Constitution re-established the freedom of schooling. The Parliament amended the Public Education Act in 1990, and enabled legal entities as well as private individuals to establish and maintain nursery, primary and secondary schools, student homes, student dormitories and primary level institutions for art education. The 1993 Public Education Act and its 1996 Amendment extended the right to found and maintain public educational institutions. The 32nd clause of the 1991 law made it possible for churches to reclaim ecclesiastic real estates that had been unlawfully nationalised and without any compensation during the party-state period, if they are to be used for educational purposes.

Private schools enjoy the benefit of autonomous operation, as they are legally independent institutions separated from the education system of the local government, but their financing and pedagogic activities are controlled by the state. They are allowed to participate in carrying out the educational duties of the government as partners. If they perform tasks of the local government, they may sign a public education agreement with the local or regional government (or with the Minister, if the institution undertakes regional or national tasks). The operation of private schools is financed from the state-budget and by the maintainer. The state grants subsidies to the maintainer of the private school as defined in the annual state budget, which cannot be less than the normative support given to the local government by the same right. The local government or the state is allowed to give supplementary subsidies above the budgetary support.

### *Church-affiliated and Private Schools*

In the past years in this field the expansion of church-affiliated, foundational and private schools was the most dynamic, but their weight is still insignificant, and education is invariably dominated by schools maintained by local governments: 93% of students attended these in the 1999/2000 school year. The number of foundational and private institutions is near four hundred (Table 4.11). They take on two roles: supplementary and substituting activities. Supplementary functions are performed by institutions practising alternative approaches in education, following a special ideology or philosophy, and pursuing altruistic goals. Institutions in the substituting role basically offer teaching and education identical to that of state schools, but they often undertake the realisation of alternative pedagogical aims and methods (being many-sided, integrative, child-oriented, alternating between individual and group-work, taking care of talented children and focussing on skill development). Many schools operate in an explicitly profit-oriented way, especially in domains of foreign language teaching, computer skills development and artistic activities. The number of applicants generally exceeds their student capacity.

On the secondary level, foundational schools are found in all school types, and among them the rate of mixed-profile institutions, and that of institutions explicitly attending to students who are in an exceptionally advantaged or underprivileged position, is fairly high. In the 1999/2000



school year they constituted 12% of secondary schools where the school-leaving exam may be taken, and 5.6% of secondary students attended them. Their rate is also significant amongst short vocational schools: they constituted 9.5% of all institutions, and 4.5% of students attended foundational or privately maintained short vocational schools.

*Table 4.11*

*Foundational schools and schools maintained by other parties than local governments, the number of their students and teachers, 1992/93–1999/2000*

	1992/93	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	Increase
<i>Institution</i>								
Nursery school	26	43	94	115	121	155	172	6.61
Primary school	25	33	47	60	66	76	87	3.48
Special education institution	2	6	6	8	10	12	13	6.50
Short vocational training school	8	11	15	14	15	16	19	2.37
Vocational training school	13	14	18	26	24	28	26	2.00
Secondary school	19	30	52	72	89	111	133	7.00
General secondary school	13	13	24	26	33	35	36	2.77
University, college	3	4	4	5	6	6	6	2.00
<i>Student</i>								
Nursery school	964	2 881	5 410	5 986	5 905	6 695	7 080	7.34
Primary school	2 500	3 299	4 126	6 353	6 718	7 852	8 943	3.58
Special education institution	264	484	591	575	615	834	950	3.60
Short vocational training school	1 107	1 044	1 136	764	1 392	1 175	1 375	1.24
Vocational training school	952	1 547	1 886	3 001	3 155	3 916	3 832	4.02
Secondary school	2 393	7 514	10 596	12 478	14 099	17 632	21 675	9.06
General secondary school	1 115	2 110	2 213	2 276	2 704	3 092	3 497	3.14
University, college	231	2 789	5 247	6 722	6 826	7 384	7 582	32.82
<i>Teacher</i>								
Nursery school	103	276	546	606	614	724	748	7.26
Primary school	290	406	550	781	804	956	1 066	3.67
Special education institution	122	175	160	260	278	300	305	2.50
Short vocational training school	19	23	24	25	42	46	57	3.00
Vocational training school	71	70	126	175	171	194	169	2.38
Secondary school	268	604	810	821	960	1 259	1 432	5.34
General secondary school	129	243	309	279	373	428	500	3.88
University, college	39	658	775	1 381	1 467	1 592	1 675	42.94

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1996, 1998; KSH educational data 1998/99, 1999/2000 and data from Mrs László Szalay



In church-affiliated schools the increase in student numbers between 1992/93 and 1999/2000 exceeded the rising trend of schools maintained by local governments in all school types (Table 4.12). The participation of churches in education is more significant at secondary level: they maintained 6.7% of institutions and 8.3% of secondary schools (attended by 5.6% of secondary students). Within secondary education, the contribution to general secondary school education is of primary significance. Their participation in vocational education is negligible.

At higher levels, however, one-third of the institutions are maintained by some of the churches. As for denominational distribution, the majority of schools are Catholic, one-fourth are Calvinist, 7.1% are Lutheran. The Jewish, Greek Catholic, Pentecost and Ecumenical Churches are represented by one or two institutions in primary school education.

One characteristic feature of the church-affiliated school system at secondary level is that a large majority of schools have their own hostels. In 1999 there was a total of 40 student dormitories maintained by churches, where 5 379 students lived, which is nearly one-third of students attending secondary church-affiliated schools and one-tenth of all boarding students.

### *Church-affiliated and Private Higher Education*

Since the early nineties, private colleges have been an organic part of Hungarian higher education. They primarily organise programmes in economics, business and technical studies, foreign languages and computer skills.

Forms of correspondence learning have become widespread. The expansion of church-affiliated higher education, which had previously been characterised by seminaries and theological training, took place in the nineties. The process brought about tension in some areas, but on the whole strengthened the state-independent higher education of churches. In the 1999/2000 school year 28 higher education institutions were maintained by churches. This is 31.4% of all institutions, and these hosted 6% of students and employed 15.8% of higher education teachers. The number of students almost multiplied fivefold between 1992/93 and 1999/2000, and that of teachers grew nearly eight times its original amount (Table 4.12).

## 4.6 STUDENT DORMITORIES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

From the perspective of social mobility and equality of opportunities, student dormitories play an important role. The 544 student dormitories operating in 1999 provided a temporary place of residence for nearly 78 thousand students. The vast majority of student dormitories serve the boarding of secondary level students: in the 1998/99 school year only 4.3% of boarders were primary school students. 48% of student dormitories hosted secondary vocational, 24% general secondary, and 21% vocational training school students. Having survived the unstable period of the nineties, the position of student dormitories now seems to have become firmly established, as the education policy recognised the significance of student dormitories, the untapped resources in the system, and the need for comprehensive professional development. This surfaced, on the one hand, in the regulatory measures introduced for student dormitories (the enforcement of special needs in the obligatory chapter for equipment and instruments for student dormitories; a more exact definition of the duties of the student dormitory and its inclusion in the Public Education Act; the enactment of the national core-programme for student

dormitory education; the foundation of the award for educational work in student dormitories), and, on the other hand, in the increase of central and local resources allocated to the development of pedagogic-educational activities in student dormitories and for the improvement of their infrastructure.

Table 4.12

*Key data on church-affiliated institutions 1992/93-1999/2000*

	1992/93	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	Increase
<i>Institution</i>								
Nursery school	22	36	43	53	60	69	74	3.36
Primary school	58	110	131	146	162	168	177	3.05
Special education institution	3	5	3	3	5	3	3	1.00
Short vocational training school	2	8	6	8	8	8	7	3.50
Vocational training school	1	1	3	4	4	5	8	8.00
Secondary school	33	48	52	63	68	85	87	2.64
General secondary school	31	44	52	63	65	71	79	2.55
University, college	26	28	28	28	28	28	28	1.08
<i>Student</i>								
Nursery school	1 539	2 650	3 290	3 947	4 236	5 031	5 230	3.40
Primary school	11 260	23 315	28 695	3 690	37 044	39 078	42 270	3.75
Special education institution	105	185	171	150	177	182	314	2.99
Short vocational training school	27	1095	576	587	662	460	314	11.63
Vocational training school	147	152	514	597	628	1 156	1 971	13.41
Secondary school	9 806	14 164	15 257	17 153	19 156	19 987	21 523	2.19
General secondary school	8 905	13 277	13 892	15 520	16 714	17 484	18 707	2.1
University, college	2 137	5 237	6 302	7 514	8 570	9 414	10 227	4.78
<i>Teacher</i>								
Nursery school	123	221	274	327	375	440	459	3.73
Primary school	899	1 915	2 383	2 663	3 030	3 261	3 479	3.87
Special education institution	17	30	15	24	41	43	58	3.41
Short vocational training school	4	90	33	45	38	32	21	5.25
Vocational training school	18	13	56	62	71	112	163	9.05
Secondary school	794	1 277	1 467	1 709	1 922	2 093	2 365	2.98
General secondary school	735	1 213	1 365	1 621	1 747	1 884	2 119	2.88
University, college	429	912	1 258	1 238	1 416	1 710	3 336	7.78

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1996, 1998; KSH educational data 1998/99, 1999/2000 and data from Mrs László Szalay

# Chapter 5

## The Content of Education

In the past decade educational systems faced a number of challenges determined by socio-economic changes. The renewal of knowledge mediated by schools and the modernisation of content have become inevitable. The itemised and accurate definition of the content of up-to-date education, however, proved extremely difficult. The state cannot assume responsibility for determining the relevant teaching content any longer and devolves other administrative levels to share the related responsibility. This process was reflected by the introduction of frame-type curriculum regulations in the 1990s across Europe.

### 5.1 REGULATIONS IN THE CONTENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

#### *The Introduction of the National Core Curriculum and the Initial Experiences*

Similarly to other countries, the introduction of the National Core Curriculum (NAT) in 1995 and the following curriculum designing process at school level was a key element of Hungarian public education.

As a result, the basic framework in the regulation of the teaching content adjusted to the previously reformed administrative relations, i.e. the former central curriculum was replaced by a two-level regulation. Essentially, it provides for a frame-type state control over educational content, whereas the key document regulating classroom processes is the school level curriculum. Each school has to create such a curriculum as part of their pedagogical programme or adopt one elaborated by others. The NAT defines the compulsory requirements common in every school, regardless of the type of the institution, for the first ten years of education. For the secondary education the common and compulsory requirements in the 11th and 12th grades are included in the subsequently passed Secondary School-leaving Examination Regulations.

What was new, however, was that these requirements were formulated according to ten comprehensive cultural domains or fields of knowledge rather than for individual subjects. The cultural domains are the following: Mother Tongue and Literature; Modern Foreign Language; Mathematics; Man and Society; Man and Nature; Our Earth and Environment; Arts; Informatics; Life-Management and Practical Studies; Physical Education and Sports.

The Public Education Act provided three years for the schools to create their local curricula in accordance with the National Core Curriculum and to adhere to the requirements of the secondary school-leaving examination regulations and the guidelines for the given type of institution, respectively. These documents regulating the teaching content on the level of schools, as part of their pedagogical programme, had to be accepted by the school staff and consented by the maintainer of the institution by the beginning of the scholastic year of 1998/99.

While implementing the National Core Curriculum, the central administration of education had to take on a significant role in improving the teachers' competence as well as creating the necessary infrastructure (service point network; development of an ICT background; sufficient supply of

model curricula and textbooks in a Databank). Institutions were given extensive professional support and help in completing and introducing the local curricula. One of the most outstanding supporters in this process was the National Institute of Public Education (OKI), which on the one hand, has organised a considerable number of courses and created forms of continuing education for teachers and, on the other hand, established an electronic Databank of NAT-compatible model curricula. Other participants of the graduate education market have joined these activities as well. Simultaneously, a national network of service points was created offering, besides curricula, a database of textbooks, experts' registers and facilities for continuing education and tender applications for teachers. The range of curricula was enriched by the complete school curricula of the winner chosen from amongst 19 educational institutions in a competition announced jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Public Foundation for the Modernisation of School Education (KOMÁ), available in print free of charge, as well as the – mostly subject-oriented – curricula compiled by the textbook publishers offered as a supplement to their publications. The lack of a professional analysis of these latter curricula, however, might cast doubts on their quality.

By the spring term of 1998 the schools fulfilled their duty of completing their pedagogical programmes and most educators participated in designing the local educational system. On the whole, 8% of primary and approximately 15% of different types of secondary schools created entirely individual school curricula, others adopted complete programmes or mostly constructed their local curricula from a selection of several sources. In quite a large number of schools, however, the necessary adoption did not take place due to lack of time or professional skills.

The design of local curricula was a great professional challenge for teachers which also, in some cases, jeopardised their jobs. Their task was rendered even more difficult by the delay in issuing the county-level development projects orienting the local design with the concept of the system of pedagogic responsibilities at a regional level. In addition to this, school maintainers often failed to re-arrange responsibilities. Contrary to the original aims of educational administration, local curriculum development did not turn into the tool of local (at least mid-term) planning. The major break-through, expected by many, usually failed to occur and the maintainers did not become real owners of their educational institutions. At the same time, a communication process has started between the schools and their maintainers regarding key issues of education and a local educational policy has started to take shape.

The period of the introduction of the National Core Curriculum has been accompanied by professional and political debates of changing dynamism. According to the statistics of public opinion surveys the acceptance of the NAT amounts to approximately 60% amongst teachers. Its main supporters were those innovative schools which have gradually introduced a whole range of reforms in teaching content from the late 1980s and its opponents were chiefly the 4-year general secondary schools. With reference to the lack of qualified curricula and the teachers' sufficient competence, the opposition parties of the time even included in their electoral campaign the demand for the revision of the National Core Curriculum in the most critical phase of the implementation of the NAT.

### *The Current Regulation, Frame Curricula*

The structural changes introduced by the Public Education Act, last amended in 1999, enforced a partially new concept of teaching content as well. The Act aims at the restoration of the 8+4 year school structure, since it divides the elementary phase of general school education into a

primary (1-8 years) and a secondary (from the 9th year to the 10th, 11th or 12th year depending on the type of the school) period. The Act announces that the permeability among the schools in the period of general education should be guaranteed in frame curricula based on the cultural domains named within the National Core Curriculum. Besides the NAT, a frame curriculum is another central document of in-class regulations by the help of which the central educational administration wishes to enhance the integration, the permeability and the systematic nature of the educational structure. By means of introducing a two-level regulation the frame curriculum increases the central responsibility, as well as the input orientation. It does not raise requirements essentially different from those presented in the NAT, but it extends those in time, i.e. the requirements can be interpreted until the end of the 12th year. The new regulations resulted in significant changes within the secondary educational period in two respects. Firstly, as separate curricula were created in different school types students are to choose a career earlier, at the age of 14. On the other hand, a distinct curriculum type was elaborated in vocational education to guide the weaker student who falls behind, thus it attempts to improve their chances for employment.

Despite the partial restriction regarding an institution's professional autonomy, the frame curricula aspire to the assurance of vindicating local characteristics. For instance, the schools will be entitled to make autonomous decisions as to the usage of certain parts of the education period (e.g. number of optional classes) in the future as well.

The actual development of the frame curricula started in the autumn of 1999. Subject committees were formed to draw up new curricula along subject boundaries. Simultaneously, for each school type and for each subject horizontal committees performed analyses and provided assistance in order to make teaching content coherent with requirements both in the one-year and in the four-year period. Another board was set up to advance the possibilities and regulations of divergence from the compulsory number of classes and curricular teaching content.

A frame curriculum can be divided into two major parts. The first part contains the general aims, the subject structure and the number of classes concerning years and subjects within the given school type. The second part includes subject-specific frame curricula. By dividing the cultural domains, frame curricula will restore the subject system and specify the minimal number of classes which allow more and more independently designed classes towards the final years of education. In accordance with the new regulations, teaching philosophy is compulsory in general secondary schools as well as the teaching of ethics in all school types. In assistance to school education, class-masters' classes will be included in the official timetable in the grades 5–12. Timetables for technical schools and secondary vocational schools allow a maximum of 5–10 classes in the general education years for strictly job-related knowledge and skills.

The decree on the introduction of frame curricula allows for certain divergences from these curricula and the licensing processes related to the application of such alternative local curricula, thus enhancing flexibility. It takes steps to decrease the daily burdens on the students.

Education according to the new local curricula – approved by school maintainers – is to be phased in from bottom up. Since it will be first introduced in the 1st, 5th and 9th grades from September, 2001, it is expected to be predominant in the whole of the Hungarian public education from the scholastic year of 2004/2005. The introduction of frame curricula, similarly to the implementation of the NAT, assigns significant organisational duties to schools. Observations show that teachers principally endorse the concept of frame curricula and the number of compulsory classes received a relatively small number of negative responses.

### *The System of Examination*

The secondary school-leaving examination has always had great significance in Hungarian public education. The Public Education Act of 1993 also established basic examination. Every student is entitled to take this examination after completing primary education, at the end of the compulsory school attendance period. This type of exam has not been established in practice, and there are heated professional debates concerning its function and content.

With the Amendment to the Public Education Act, the exam regulations have ceased to play a key role in the design of local curricula and output regulations had less control over defining the teaching content. The Basic Examination does not have any influence on local curricula, while the requirements of the secondary school-leaving examination continue to play a major role in orientation. The abolishment of the division line at the 10th year has greatly diminished the significance of the Basic Examination. Although this exam certificate qualifies the holder for certain jobs and professional exams, it is not a prerequisite for passing on to the 11th year in any school type, and additionally does not provide any sort of qualification. The secondary school-leaving examination remains to be a prominent point in the vertical division of the education system that certifies the fulfillment of the requirements posited at the lower educational level (ISCED3) and is simultaneously a prerequisite for passing on to the higher level (ISCED4,5).

Promoting the expansion of secondary education, a priority in educational policy, the central educational administration urged the introduction of a two-level system and the standardisation of school-leaving examinations in the mid 1990s. The new educational administration, taking office in 1998, has not yet pronounced a decision regarding this issue. Thus the realisation of the 1997 executive decree on secondary school-leaving examination remains doubtful. The decree calls for a unified (identical in general secondary and secondary vocational schools), two-level (optionally intermediate or advanced level in every subject, the latter also serving as a university entrance exam) and standardised (including centrally elaborated tasks) school-leaving examination to be introduced in 2004.

Since secondary school-leaving examinations do not hinder secondary school expansion, neither the educational administration nor the institutions and their students are interested in reforming the system of school-leaving examinations on the short run. The educational administration, however, on the long run continues to have an interest in receiving an objective picture of the efficiency of educational structure – chiefly that of secondary education – through the results of adequate and valid school-leaving exams.

The process of developing a standardised final exam is being carried out practically according to the original schedule. Detailed exam requirements were completed by the end of 1997 in 10 general subjects (Hungarian Language and Literature; History; Foreign Language I.; Foreign Language II.; Biology; Geography; Physics; Chemistry; Drawing and Visual Culture). Preparations concerning exam descriptions, content and grading principles started in 1998 and have been in progress ever since.

## 5.2 CHANGES IN THE CONTENT OF TEACHING

Following the abolishment of central curricula in 1993, changes in the subject structure offered educational institutions some real room for manoeuvring. This had a major influence on the content of education. The changes in teaching content have mostly taken place at the institu-



tional level and therefore lack precise data in description. The general experiences are however, that primary and secondary schools introduced entirely new subjects or enlarged the range of optional ones rather than upgrading the content of existing ones. Nearly two-thirds of vocational schools increased the proportion of theoretical subjects.

## *Changes in the Content of General Education*

### **Nursery School**

Built on the National Core Programme of Nursery School Education (1996), nursery schools have drawn up or chosen their educational programmes. In addition to the selection offered by the Databank of the National Institution of Public Education, a similar amount of other educational programmes have enriched the choice. The number of nursery schools adopting a complete programme was negligible (a total of 3%), most institutions have come up with a programme of their own. All programmes focus on development through a number of playful activities suiting the special characteristics of the age group. Objectives like mediating a healthy and environmentally conscious lifestyle and a respect for traditions; handling children according to their needs and a guarantee for equal opportunities at school beginning are high priorities. Another frequent element of the programmes is the integrated education: nursery school teachers are willing to deal with 1-5 children with minor handicaps (with physical, visual, hearing or speech difficulties) in a group. The majority of religious nursery schools have been aided in forming their programmes by the Catholic and the Calvinist frame programmes for nursery school education. 18% of private nursery schools are engaged in integrated education and 21% in ethnic education.

### **Primary and Secondary Schools**

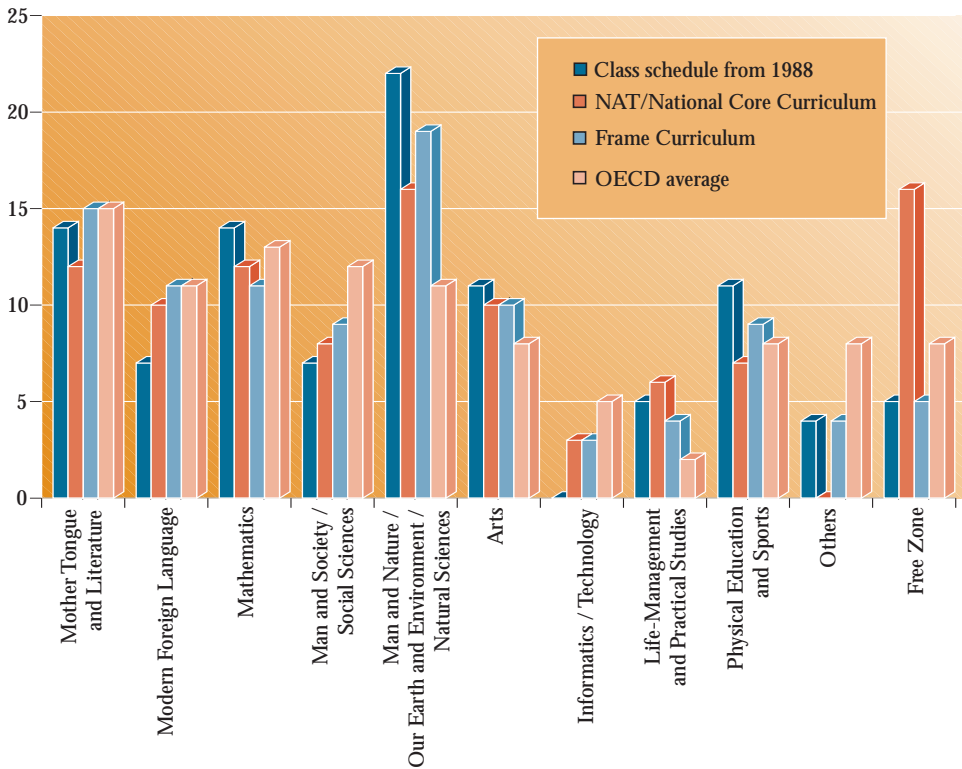
In the Public Education Act the state specifies the minimum number of classes necessary for the fulfillment of the tasks of education, and defines the maximum number of students' classes per day. According to the provisions of the Act, at least 90% of the maximum number of classes must actually be taught, and students must have at least 90% of the maximum number of classes. Within the optional in-class activities, schools may offer compensatory classes, compensation for inequalities, catering for the gifted and consultation, and may teach special or additional knowledge. The resulting number of classes must be financed at least in 80% by the maintainer of the school. The number of obligatory classes should be increased by 10% in the education of ethnic groups and minorities, and by 15-50% in the education of the handicapped, depending on the nature of the deficiency.

In accordance with the 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act the number of compulsory and optional classes slightly increased. In reality, however, the actual number of obligatory classes is approximately 5-17% higher than it is presented in the Act and in the statistics. This tendency is due to the fact that the schools give compulsory classes at the (partial) expense of optional classes in order to cover the demand for extra classes of the newly introduced subjects, advanced education, early foreign language teaching, etc. As a result, students are often overburdened. To draw a limit to this 'illegal' extension in the number of compulsory classes, the 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act made it clear that students are only required to attend activities above the obligatory in-class training at their own request (in case of minors, parental consent is needed). In an international comparison the number of obligatory classes in Hungary is, however, rather small owing, above all, to the shorter period of the scholastic year.



An important indicator of teaching content is the number of classes associated with a given subject or cultural domain. These proportions are, aside from recommendations by the Ministry, more and more dominated by school-level decisions, as the NAT allows a free zone of classes in every year for independent usage. From 1988 on there has been a noticeable turn towards social sciences. The schools, more and more identifying with the role of a service company, have raised the number of classes in demand and reduced that of others within their sphere of authority. Aside from the basic subjects and the subjects improving key skills, Physical Education and Sports is also taught in a greater number of classes (Fig. 5.1).

*Figure 5.1*  
*Average number of classes according to cultural domains in the central class schedules and recommendations for class schedules in Hungary, 1988, 1995 and 2000; and in the OECD countries (in the education of students 12–14 years of age), 1998 (%)*



Source: Calculations by Irén Vágó based on a weekly class schedule for divided primary schools, 1988; National Core Curriculum, 1995; calculations by Irén Vágó based on the frame curricula of primary education, 2000; Education at a Glance, 2000

NB: The cultural domain called Life-Management and Practical Studies usually means practical activities, career orientation in the practice of the European countries, while several elements of the Technology courses in Hungary are rather taught within the cultural domain of Informatics. Class-masters' Classes are included in Hungary within Others, whilst in the case of OECD countries Religious Studies, which are compulsory in several countries, were listed here, and which constitute an average 3% of the total number of classes.

### Advanced Level Education

In the 1990s the attendance of advanced level classes in primary schools practically did not change. In secondary education, however, the interest in attending certain courses in a raised number of classes, especially those providing knowledge that the labour market valued the most

(foreign language, information science) radically increased in the late 1990s. The access to forms of advanced level education, however, shows a rather diverse picture respective of the type of location and institution. Schools located in cities have more access to such possibilities than those located in villages. Similarly, general secondary schools are better equipped, in this respect, than vocational schools.

Various institutions offer a rather colourful choice of optional classes for the improvement of the talented, and for career orientation and spare-time activities. In the scholastic year of 1996/97, for example, 1 200 schools offered 324 kinds of optional classes. Informatics and Mathematics groups functioned in the greatest number (in 50% of the institutions). Popular Sport Activities, Choir, Mother Tongue and Literature and Foreign Language groups featured in the repertoire of approximately one-fourth to one-third of the institutions, and 20% of them held Dance/Folkdance, Drama and Drawing groups. Public education institutions also offered compensatory courses for weaker students at the expense of the number of non-obligatory classes. According to the 1996/97 data mentioned above, an average of 27% of primary school pupils and 23% of the vocational school students attended these courses.

### *Changes in the Content of Vocational Education*

The Act of Public and Vocational Education of 1993 and also the National Training Register (OKJ) (first published in 1994) have led to radical innovations both in the teaching content and the structure within and without school education. Since the introduction of the National Core Curriculum extended the period of general education up to 16 years of age in 1995, the number of schools turning away from the traditional 3 year training in weekly shifts in favour of the 2+2 structure, and those replacing skilled worker training with vocational secondary education have been constantly on the rise.

In the competition for acquiring students two-thirds of schools have started education in one or more attractive professions, however, only a few institutions have abandoned programmes, which trained students for outdated professions by the second half of the 1990s. Only in the case of heavy industry was an actual reduction registered, and the most dynamically expanding field was that of institutions with an ICT profile.

The scholastic year of 1998/99 brought about a complete break away from the previous training structure and content. From that time on, vocational education could only be started from 16 years of age, and only in accordance with the professions listed in the National Training Register. Therefore the final trainees who had started their 3-year training after completing 8 years of primary education took their apprentice exam in the year 2000. The final age group in secondary vocational schools which is still being trained according the old curriculum will finish school in 2001; and after completing a fourth year of training they may receive a secondary school-leaving certificate, in addition to their professional qualifications.

### **Vocational training schools**

The increasing demand for classrooms due to the extension of the training period by one more year – the initial year being shifted to the 11th year – as well the larger number of classes on general education and career orientation classes, resulted in a shortage of rooms in most vocational training schools.

The most significant change of the 1998/99 scholastic year affected the 9th year of the schools: instead of providing general education and skills of the trade simultaneously, they now have an introductory period of general education. Since the gradual introduction of the NAT allows a fair proportion of freedom in designing the local curricula, the subjects and content of teaching may differ considerably from one institute to another. Some of the schools have simply attempted to teach the topics given in the NAT for the 9th and 10th years, others created a temporary curriculum. Some far-reaching local curricula, however, have articulated such concrete aims as helping underachievers catch up with the others; prevention of drop-outs among school age trainees still without a qualification; or preparing the students for training in reference to personality and skills. Additional curricula have aimed at keeping the students in the school even after the 10th year in order to prepare them for the basic examination. Certain vocational training schools have consciously attempted to elaborate on a curriculum that would ensure the positions of the teaching staff and the technical trainers, thus minimising the conflicts.

There are significant differences between 9th and 10th year programmes concerning general education and the weekly hours and relative importance of subjects. The number of Mathematics and Mother Tongue and Literature classes are above average only in schools with the aim of organising compensation classes for underachievers or in schools that have no personnel to teach other subjects (such as Foreign Language teaching, Informatics and subjects of skill) in more classes. The teaching of Informatics is spreading slowly due, above all, to the lack of prepared teaching staff and equipment.

### **Secondary Vocational Schools**

As secondary vocational schools of new model in general met the new legal requirements, their local curricula needed relatively few alternations. These schools typically focus on new 1-2 year programmes for acquiring secondary or higher qualifications after the secondary school-leaving exam; and projects financed by new World Bank loans facilitated this process.

The implementation of frame curricula is expected to bring about further radical changes. Considerable discrepancies might show in the frame curricula regarding subject areas and content, the conditions of improvement and general development requirements. For instance, one curriculum will guarantee permeability towards secondary schools, while the other will serve to focus on underachievers. General education is conducted according to the provisions of the NAT and the frame curricula in vocational training, as well. Professional training, on the other hand, is based on so-called central programmes built on the requirements of vocational certificates and exams. These programmes are prepared by appointment to the relevant Ministries, under the supervision of the National Institute of Vocational Education (NSZI).

### ***Content Changes in Other Fields of Public Education***

During the 1990s changes in teaching content took place in other areas of public education as well, such as primary art education, special education and the education of minorities.

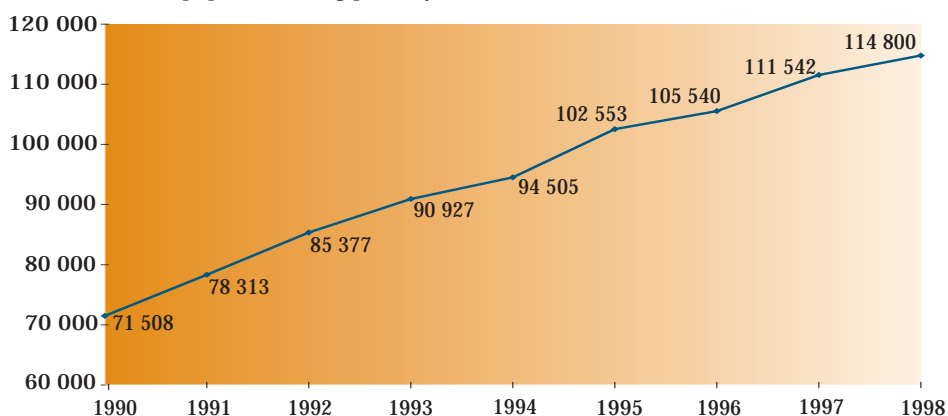
#### **Primary Art Education**

In the past decades there has been a primary institutional structure specialising exclusively in teaching art, as part of the system of public education in Hungary. Their role is to establish the skills of artistic expression and to prepare students for further professional education. In these

institutions, with programmes ranging from six to twelve years, compulsory school attendance cannot be achieved, that is students cannot prepare for the Basic Examination. Having completed the final year, students may take a Basic Art Examination that entitles them to pursue their art studies, after which they may take a Final Art Examination.

Most students are attracted to music schools with great traditions (Fig. 5.2). Institutions for teaching dance, fine and applied arts, performing arts and puppet performance are also present in smaller numbers, amongst which the proportion of private schools is particularly high. In spite of the demographic ebb, the number of pupils attending schools of primary art education has been growing dynamically, the participation rate is outstanding even by international standards. Particularly the interest in learning instrumental music shows a growing tendency.

*Figure 5.2*  
*Changes in the number of pupils attending primary music education, 1990-1998*



Source: KSH; Educational statistics by the Ministry of Education

Up until the late 1990s regulations concerning content in primary art education had been outdated for several decades. In accordance with the 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act an executive decree was issued – after thorough professional preparations – on the requirements and curricular programmes of primary art education, including a supplement in the requirements and a central curricular programme for 4 branches of art.

### **The Education of Minorities and Ethnic Groups**

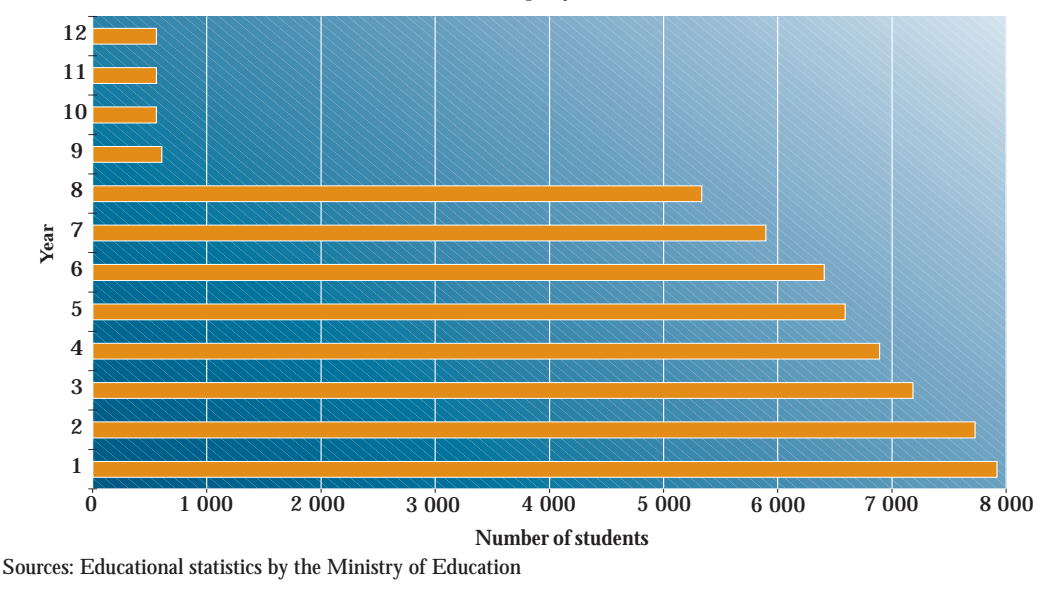
The education of minorities is a part of public education, there are, however, certain specifications that allow for the articulation of characteristic content and requirements that correspond to the demands of minorities. Most requirements of minority education are regulated by the special guiding principles of the National Core Curriculum. These guidelines include the aims and possible forms of minority education, and define the content requirements regarding the education of mother tongue, Hungarian language and literature, and ethnic awareness. Minority education can be organised in the following classes: education in native language, bilingual education, minority language education, traditional minority language education, extended minority language education, compensatory education for the Gypsy minority, and intercultural education.

In designing the local curricula of minority schools the greatest problem is defining the area of knowledge that minority languages belong to. In the National Core Curriculum the Hungarian language serves as the alternative to minority languages. Since the vast majority of

school age children of ethnic minorities do not speak their mother tongue, the expectation of a native language level is just as unrealistic as the orientation of the teaching of the Hungarian language as a second language on the grounds of foreign language education. The 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act raised the number of compulsory classes in ethnic education by 10%. Nevertheless, there are still not enough classes in the curriculum to teach three languages (the minority language, Hungarian and a foreign language).

A crucial circumstance in forming the content requirements is the fact that a significant proportion of first year pupils in primary schools are to leave the ethnic education system in upper years, and only a fraction of them will take the secondary school-leaving examination in ethnic secondary schools (Fig. 5.3). The development of secondary ethnic education is facing certain difficulties, inasmuch as the elaboration of school-leaving examination requirements in ethnic languages suffered delays until the end of the past decade. On the other hand, the fact that intermediate or advanced-level language examination certificates may be obtained by means of sufficient language performance at the secondary school-leaving examination might be an attractive feature of ethnic secondary schools.

*Figure 5.3*  
*The number of students enrolled in ethnic education per year, 1998/99*



The changes of the 1990s had an effect on the network of minority schools as well. The number of institutions has increased, their regional distribution has improved, as well as their variety of school types and forms of minority language teaching. Most of the schools function in integrated structures, i.e. only certain classes are attended by ethnic students. The number of those primary schools which offer ethnic education is slightly increasing: in 1997/98 390 institutions (10.4% of the total number of primary schools) pursued registered ethnic education, whereas this number amounted to 393 (10.5% of the total) by 1998/99. On average, there are 11 students in a class (excluding ethnic German classes). The number of secondary schools has shown a downward tendency in the past three years: from 26 (1996) to 21 (1998), and only two joint secondary schools deal with ethnic vocational education (in German and in Slovak, respectively).

The number of children attending minority education amounted to 5.7% of the total number of school children on the primary level in 1999/2000. The number and proportion of those receiving ethnic education is increasing. This trend is apparent in the case of the German language, while other minority languages were learnt by fewer children in primary schools in 1999/2000 than at the beginning of the decade. It often happens that a family – otherwise conscious of their national identity – do not send their children into minority schools, however, children from non-minority families might also happen to attend such schools.

The number of ethnic teachers has grown more dynamically than that of the students and this is why the number of students per teacher has dropped from 52 (1987) to 39 (1997). This downward tendency, however, is due almost solely to the improving supply of teachers of the German language. There are great differences concerning the type of location – the shortage in teacher supply at the present time is primarily observable in small villages. Higher education institutions do not train teachers who could teach their subjects in a minority language at all, similarly to continuing education.

The most important material conditions lacking from the education of minorities are the textbooks and school equipment. The range of textbooks in Romany languages is the poorest, while the most ample choice is offered in Romanian, Serb (half of which is published in the homeland) and Croatian. There are also significant discrepancies concerning subjects. Romany textbooks, for instance, are only published for first grade pupils, and there are no textbooks for chemistry, physics and informatics in any of the ethnic languages. The Ministry of Education has made every effort since 1998 in order to improve book supplies in ethnic education.

### **Special Education**

Over 5% of children in primary schools are handicapped, which is higher than the relevant proportions of developed countries. Their rights for special care are guaranteed in the Public Education Act, should they attend institutes for the handicapped or integrated forms of education. Curricular principles for handicapped students, based on the National Core Curriculum, include handicap-specific guidelines, goals of improvement and tasks, drawing up new proportions in knowledge areas, and the elaboration of detailed requirements for certain larger handicap types in each cultural domain.

On the grounds of these principles, autonomous schools and divisions for the handicapped have created their pedagogical programmes and local curricula. In accordance with the Public Education Act, institutes educating children with special needs will also have revised and corrected programmes by September, 2001.

### ***Improvements in areas of high priority***

Within the field of school education in the second half of the 1990s, the improvement of the so-called key competencies attracted most of the attention. From the aspect of content improvement, primarily communication skills (especially communication in foreign languages, or via ICT), cooperative skills and learning capacity have gained prominence.

### **Foreign Language Teaching**

The level of foreign language skills among the adult population in Hungary is alarmingly poor. This can be attributed to several reasons; firstly to the isolation of the country for several decades, to the undemanding nature of the labour market in this respect, and to the rather inef-



ficient compulsory Russian language teaching. The demand for teaching western languages started to grow dynamically in the 1970s and 1980s. Though the launch of bilingual education (in 1987) was a major development, only the abolition of compulsory Russian language teaching brought about a real break-through in the education system. In the following three years the schools reformed the structure of foreign language teaching practically all by themselves: while in the scholastic year of 1989/90 the number of students learning Russian amounted to 928 000 and of those learning western languages to 275 000, by 1992/93 this rate changed to 200 000 for the Russian and 975 000 for western languages. The central education administration played a fairly negligible role in this major modernisation process. Besides the efforts made by the schools, local governments, which became school maintainers, helped the transition to teaching western languages with additional funds and by new means of human resource management.

The development of foreign language teaching had not always been a high priority of education. The Ministry of Education is currently trying to propose a national concept for foreign language teaching, developing new guidelines in language policy, however, is not an easy task. According to the plans, the programme expected in 2001 will identify the objective of providing every student with adaptive language skills, and furthermore, that public education be able to prepare every student for one intermediate level and one basic level language examination by the end of secondary school.

#### *Students of Foreign Languages, Languages Taught*

While the total number of primary school children keeps dropping, the number of those learning foreign languages in primary schools continued to increase until the scholastic year of 1998/99. Today 3 579 primary schools are engaged in foreign language teaching (that is 95.9% of these institutions), sometimes making great financial sacrifices for this purpose. 84% of the schools offer German, 67% English, 5% teach French and another 5% Russian (as well). Though learning German in primary education is still more widespread than English, the discrepancy between the two languages is gradually reducing. Signs of linguistic diversification are showing as well; more and more students learn languages labelled as 'other' – including classical Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, modern Dutch, Finnish, Japanese, Ukrainian, Polish, etc. (Table 5.1).

As reflected by the statistics, language teaching in the three types of secondary schools varies greatly. In general secondary schools two languages are taught starting from the first (9th) year, in the case of secondary vocational schools, however, this occurs quite rarely, except for professions that require language skills (tourism, catering). Compulsory language teaching is being phased in from the bottom up in vocational training schools (accommodating a quarter of the students) from 1998/99 and on.

#### *Advanced Level and Bilingual Foreign Language Teaching*

Advanced level foreign language education means teaching of the factual knowledge of a given subject in a foreign language according to higher standards and using more weekly hours than usual. Advanced level teaching might take place in four forms: bilingual education, education with a special curriculum, optional education or other advanced forms. The first bilingual general secondary school in Hungary were founded in 1987 and from the early 1990s all school types (with the exception of vocational training schools) have started such programmes: in the scholastic year of 1999/00, 56% of students of bilingual programmes studied in general secondary schools, whilst 44% studied in secondary vocational schools. Such secondary schools function in every county of Hungary.



Table 5.1

*The number and proportion of students learning foreign languages in primary and secondary education, 1992/93, 1997/98, 1999/2000*

Language	Primary school						Secondary school					
	1992/93		1997/98		1999/2000		1992/93		1997/98		1999/2000	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
English	224 024	32.0	316 162	43.6	347 444	47.7	171 232	42.2	235 383	46.6	255 812	48.2
German	325 408	46.5	373 957	51.7	357 647	49.0	148 922	36.7	201 196	39.8	208 997	39.6
French	12 122	1.7	8 655	1.2	7 967	1.0	29 380	7.2	27 578	5.5	26 915	5.1
Russian	138 249	19.8	8 691	1.2	6 312	0.8	56 657	13.9	9 212	1.8	4 556	0.9
Latin	nd	0.0	6 741	0.9	6 396	0.9	nd	0.0	12 779	2.5	11 028	2.0
Italian	nd	0.0	2 025	0.3	1 795	0.2	nd	0.0	11 216	2.2	11 653	2.2
Other	nd	0.0	8 112	1.1	1 334	0.2	nd	0.0	8 106*	1.6	9 120**	1.7
Total	699 803	100	724 343	100	728 895	100	406 191	100	505 470	100	528 081	100

Source: Calculations by Irén Vágó based on the education statistics of the Ministry of Education, calculations by Erika Garami for 1999/2000

NB: Each student is listed under every learned language.

\* Out of this Spanish: 2 760 individuals = 0.5%

\*\* Out of this Spanish: 3 306 individuals = 0.6%

Bilingual primary schools are still considered today to be unique, however, parents show a great interest in this form. Bilingual primary and secondary schools alike attract a double to sevenfold over-application. In bilingual schools any of the subjects may be taught in a foreign language. The most frequent subjects studied in this way are History, Mathematics, Biology and Geography. English and German are the most widespread target languages, bilingual schools of French, Italian, Russian and Spanish are only found in Budapest, but they can provide for student dormitory accommodation for students from the country. There is a gradual shift towards the 'great languages'. Higher education in Hungary still does not train general and technical teachers capable of teaching in foreign languages, neither are public education textbooks published in foreign languages.

Teaching Hungarian as a foreign language falls under the rule of special regulations. The relevant provisions are found in the Public Education Act, and the Secondary School-leaving Examination Regulations along with the guidelines issued in 1997 define the detailed requirements. The latter document defines possible types of bilingual education in particular and, within these types, the proportions of the target languages (minimum 35% of the total number of classes). These parameters serve to ensure the quality of this relatively costly form of education. These guiding principles are of historical importance: although educational institutions of foreign languages have been functioning in Hungary since the 18th century, this the first time for a law to settle the relationship between Hungarian and foreign teaching languages, as well as the theoretical, management and competence issues of bilingual education.

### *The Acknowledgement of Language Learning*

Out of all the knowledge acquired within the period of compulsory school attendance, language skills present only a part with an early (acquired from the age of 14 years) and external (to the structure of education) qualification system that is accepted in the education and in the labour market alike. Students have been strongly motivated to obtain a language certificate at the earliest possi-

ble age, formerly by advantages (waiver from further language learning, eminent secondary school-leaving examination certificate, bonus points at the entrance examination to a higher education institution, language allowance), or by the current disadvantages related to the lack of state examination certificates (certain university majors and working positions are unavailable, higher education degrees and academic titles cannot be obtained). While until the early 1990s the number of applicants for language examinations had consisted in 10–15% of secondary school students of 14–19 years of age, by 1998 this proportion reached 65% of the total. In today's Hungarian secondary schools language examination has become the real measurement and actual aim of language learning rather than the traditional forms in the acknowledgement of language skills. An examination of a non-educational institution has appeared in the schools as a 'hidden curriculum' with the requirements not being described clearly enough to function as a quasi curriculum in language teaching. The year 2000 is a significant milestone in the external measurement of school knowledge, since from that time on language examination certificates could be issued exclusively by those language schools that have undergone the accreditation processes. These new regulations put an end to the monopoly previously held by the Centre of Foreign Language Education (ITK) and give way for private schools to obtain the right for language examinations recognised by the state. The accreditation process is, on the other hand, a hotly debated issue, because there is no such system functioning in Europe, and it is feared that the complicated and costly method will lead to the termination of examinations in less popular languages. In addition, changes are to be expected in the acknowledgement of language skills within the school as well. Following the introduction of a two-level secondary school-leaving examination, the advanced level final language exam could prospectively be taken as a state accredited language examination, provided that the hosting school, similarly to other language schools, is accredited.

### *Language Teachers*

Public education statistics registered 24 712 language teachers in 1999/2000, however, a mere 61.9% of them (15 291) actively teach their subjects, as there are still a large number of qualified Russian teachers, of whom only 4% actually teach Russian. An important factor that could guarantee the quality of language teaching is being delayed: the provision of the Public Education Act which says that only fully qualified language teachers with a university or college degree may teach in schools will only come into force in September, 2002. While the good news is that the number of students per teacher has improved both in primary and secondary schools, this rate in vocational training schools remains bad enough. The number of teacher trainees majoring in a western language per year has grown fivefold in ten years. Should all the graduates (3 000–4 000 a year) seek employment in public education in one single year, the poor supply of teachers would be instantly solved.

The peripheral conditions of effective language teaching (choice of textbooks; special classrooms for language learning; access to videos, computers and the Internet; domestic and international tender applications, etc.) have been partially realised in primary schools and practically completed in secondary schools.

### **Teaching ICT**

ICT education started in Hungarian schools in the mid 1980s, mostly in the form of optional classes, with outdated, poor capacity equipment, based on faulty concepts of the subject. By 1992/93 over 100 000 students attended optional Information Science courses and a few experimental or alternative schools introduced Informational Science as an obligatory subject. The

National Core Curriculum includes Informatics with upgraded contents as an independent cultural domain from the 5th year upwards, and recommends 0.5-1 or – from the 7th to the 10th year – 1-2 weekly classes. Observations show that school level local curricula devote even more time to ICT education and the institutions rearrange the teachers' weekly hours and school funds, as much as possible, to support this new knowledge area. A 1999 international survey (SITES) found, that by the end of the 8th year every Hungarian child has learned the usage of computers, 90% have learned word processing, over 50% of them are familiar with data processing, the use of graphical programmes, and basic level programming as well. The use of ICT-related knowledge in other subjects as teaching aid tools, however, has still hardly taken place.

At the end of the nineties the Ministry of Education identified the infrastructure-related development of ICT in schools as a priority. In 1997/98 every secondary school, every independent secondary student dormitory and nearly 250 primary schools received local computer networks and full scale Internet service supported by the maintainers within the frame of the Internet Project for Secondary Schools. With this programme upper secondary education has approached the international forefront in a short while with respect to ICT provisions; lower grades of the education, however, are still lagging behind. In 1998 in Hungary the pupil per computer ratio was still as high as 30 in lower secondary education, which is over a double of the average of 13 developed countries, moreover, these statistics show large variation, so this rate differs greatly from one institution to another. This rate varies between 22 and 42 in 90% of the schools, however, in some schools of highly advantageous position only 16, in less prosperous ones a number of up to 60 children have to share one computer.

The central development project continued from June, 1998 with somewhat altered aims. While the number of computer laboratories has risen from 910 to over 1 700, the emphasis was placed on the improvement in the service of content, to teacher training and to the development of a two-way data flow and the establishment of an ICT system of public education. Though the pace of network development is slowing down, through the establishment of the approximately 200 planned laboratories, technical schools (and thus all institutions of secondary education) and ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries are to become connected. The appearance of the renewed (both in form and content) Írisz-SuliNet web-site on the Internet in September, 1999 marked a notable step in the efforts for content development.

Teachers insisting on traditional pedagogical roles first showed a long-lasting aversion towards the use of ICT. In the mid 1990s, for example, less than half of the teachers could use computers and had a substandard knowledge of information science. Teachers' attitude has noticeably improved since that time. According to survey results, while in 1995 the proportion of those using ICT was about 10%, with another 10% completely refusing to do so, by 1998 the proportion of actual users rose above 17% and the proportion of those remaining entirely reserved diminished to a mere 3%. Two-thirds of teachers declared that they would be willing to use educational software, CDs and the Internet 'on certain conditions'. A representative survey, completed by the end of 1998, reveals that 56.3% of the teachers have attended continuing courses in information science and the expenses have been fully reimbursed by the school (in the case of 50% of the teachers) or partly reimbursed (for another 30%).

The in-class adoption of ICT has started to gain momentum amongst non-ICT teachers as well. Hungarian headmasters play a leading role in supporting the institutional and in-class employment of ICT even in international comparison.

## Alternatives in Pedagogy

The 1985 Education Act provided opportunities for alternative educational approaches. The Act declared that teachers are free to apply the educational plans according to the local circumstances and to the students' state of development. Education inspectors, who had formerly supervised the execution of curricular orders, were replaced by experts providing guidance. Henceforth new possibilities opened up for the innovators of education seeking new ways, and the road was cleared for the so-called alternative pedagogical systems; the development and testing of curricular, education managing and methodological alternatives. The reform-pedagogical efforts of foreign countries became widely known in this period. The first alternative schools, using special teaching material and methodology different from mass education, welcomed crowds of teachers as visitors, introduced themselves in conferences and made efforts to raise the standards of Hungarian educational culture.

One group of alternative schools includes institutions involved in the great European alternative pedagogy (such as the Montessori Education Centre, the Rogers Personality-Oriented School or the Waldorf Schools). Others include uniquely Hungarian initiatives. Schools like the 'Kincskereső', 'Burattino', Humanistic Cooperative School or – on the secondary level – the 'Alternatív Közgazdasági Gimnázium' and the 'Belvárosi Tanoda' are still working in isolation at the turn of the millennium. Those schools, however, which have adopted pedagogical models by József Zsolnai and László Gáspár, two distinguished names of the 'reform elite generation', function in school networks, much like the most significant alternative forms of education known abroad. The application of a distinctively new pedagogical paradigm has helped these two great alternative initiatives to gain ground: the complete revision of the entire structure of school activities; curricula planned for the whole period of compulsory school attendance (primary and secondary education); textbooks and the operation of their very own continuing education system for teachers.

Parallel to the decentralisation process of the management and the extension of local autonomy, interest in alternative pedagogical systems has decreased. Alternative schools today tend to meet more and more specific demands. Many of them perform integrated or compensatory education and deal with children with special needs, or fulfil the requirements of the most demanding parents on the other pole. Foundational and private schools are present in this circle in great numbers, but other maintainers operate alternative schools as well. Training for alternative education in full-time teacher training is taking place exclusively in the form of optional courses.

## 5.3 THE MEDIATORS OF THE CHANGES IN THE TEACHING CONTENT

### *Textbooks*

A well-regulated – and lately somewhat crowded – market for public education textbooks has been functioning for a decade in Hungary. Of all registered publishers 10% are engaged in publishing textbooks and teaching aids, and every year more and more companies want to get a share of the 7 thousand million textbook market, providing a modest but safe profit. A prerequisite for the admission to the textbook market is an official textbook qualification. The related licensing process is regulated by the Minister of Education. The Ministry of Education issues a list of the approved textbooks and aids every year, which is mailed to the schools in printed and electronic (floppy disc, CD, Internet) forms. (The list consists of approximately 5 000 publications.)

The Ministry also has showrooms for textbooks at so-called service points where the teachers have an opportunity to have a close look at the whole range of choices. The Decree on Textbooks compels the publishers to automatically send copies of new books to the 38 showrooms.

The National Textbook Association organises fairs where new textbooks are presented and a week-long series of events titled Hungarodidact for the exhibition of textbooks as well as school equipment.

### **The Market of Textbooks**

Teachers have the right – after consultations with the body of teachers teaching the same subject in their school – to select textbooks, teaching aids and school equipment. During the planning process of the pedagogical programmes harmonisation demands have gained strength. Decisions of the teaching staff are often reached to unify the usage of textbooks in each subject at the school level. The actual sponsors, i.e. the parents and the users, namely the students, however, are not involved in this process.

A school usually orders the necessary textbooks from approximately 8-15 publishers. The textbook packages for the students consist of these textbooks and reference books. According to relevant statistics, one student had to obtain an average of 11.2 books for the scholastic year of 1999/2000. Most textbooks have been replaced since the change of regime. Having tried a whole range of new products, teachers seem to have become tired of innovation by the end of the past decade and remained loyal to old, well-established books.

Competition amongst publishers has become increasingly fierce in the 1990s. Although a total of 17 million copies of textbooks are published by 183 publishers, merely 12 of them gained at least a 1% share of the profit in the market. These are the companies which publish 95.9% of public education textbooks; with a market share of 91.6% in 1999 in publishing textbooks and reference books used in teaching.

### **Textbook Prices, Funding**

In 1999, nearly 17 million books sold in public education, for a total of approximately 6.7 billion HUF. Over a third of this amount (2.4 billion HUF) was financed by the state through a textbook allowance given to every student. There is no available data on textbook allowance given by local governments, nevertheless, this form of support affects a surprisingly high proportion of students, though sometimes only through symbolic amounts. The greatest portion of book bills is paid by the parents. 25% of the subsidies has to be spent on so-called long life books remaining at the school, with the remainder being equally distributed among the children, or the schools purchase the entire book package for those most in need from this amount. Parents were to expect roughly 5 000–10 000 HUF expenses per year, while the average price of textbooks was 620 HUF in 1999. 88% of ordered books are selected from books of low or reasonable price. A ministerial directive greatly influenced the regulation of the prices as well, the decree practically placed a maximum limit to the textbook prices within the guidelines initially set forth by the 1998 Decree on Textbooks. Publishers, however, keep reducing their prices due to competitors rather than the Ministry.

### ***School Equipment***

The market for school equipment is far less regulated than that of the textbooks. A system of measurement, a qualifying procedure similar to the endorsement of textbooks and the limitation on products' prices have not been established. Neither is there a dominant governmental equipment producer present on the market aside from foreign and domestic private companies.

The temporary recession of school equipment production after the change of regime stopped by the end of the 1990s, yet on the whole, market supplies could be considered to be sufficient. The real problem is the lack of solvent buyers.

From 1998 the Decree on the Compulsory (Minimal) Equipment Supplies for Educational Institutions has played a key role in regulating and improving the school equipment provision of public education institutions. It named the necessary premises, furniture, educational aids and equipment for the school education of the handicapped, nursery schools, and dormitories; and defined the exact numbers needed by each institute, site, group or child. According to the current Public Education Act, maintainers are compelled to prepare a schedule by 31, July, 2001 in order to implement the decree. The 1999 Amendment to the Public Education Act declares that all items included in the Register of Compulsory School Equipment should be applied for after 5 years in the case of functioning public education institutions and immediately at the initiation of new ones. In addition to forming a legal framework, the improvement of equipment provisions for schools and nursery schools also needs central financial resources for the development.

### **Traditional School Equipment**

In all likelihood, public education institutions set only a minimal percentage of their budget on replacing their stocks and purchasing new, up-to-date equipment in the recession period of the 1990s. Only after the indispensable computer acquisitions could the renewal and purchase of school equipment take place, financed mainly by the private revenues of the schools or by parental support. In lack of available central funds, considerable differences have appeared among schools concerning school equipment provisions. The results of a representative 1996/97 survey revealed that only the traditional audio-visual equipment supplies were completely covered. Due to the major developments of the late 1990s, Hungarian secondary schools are well equipped with computers even in international comparison. However, in the field of equipment major discrepancies show among the schools according to their size. While the supplies of classical school equipment are fairly unified, the more modern the items are, the more noticeable the drawbacks of small schools become.

### ***Foundations and Programmes for Professional Development***

Several development funds and programmes providing financial support for all kinds of initiatives in educational innovations play a role in the renewal of the content of public education. Support is usually distributed via open tenders thus being available for all innovative workshops.

The Public Foundation for the Modernisation of School Education (KOMA), founded in 1995, contributes to the performance of developmental duties of the Minister of Education defined in the Public Education Act. Objectives of the Foundation include responsibilities like financial assistance to the enhancement and development of optional curricula and educational programmes on the grounds of the National Core Curriculum and the National Requirements for Secondary School-leaving Examination (including the curricula and programmes of ethnic schools); and to the institution level improvement of nation-wide examinations (secondary school-leaving exam and the basic exam). Furthermore, KOMA assists the development of an information system for public education, supports pedagogical studies aiming at the improvement of public education and projects that strengthen the relations between the schools and their social environment (school maintainers, students and private associations of parents). A board of 17 trustees of KOMA annually invites project proposals for the accomplishment of improvement aims, the amount of which may be reduced or increased by the board, depending on the standard of the proposal.



Public foundations for the county level development of public education belong to the newest improvement resources of public education. Most of them were founded in the beginning of 1997. Their roles and responsibilities are largely related to local interests, their financial means can be rapidly and effectively attached to the current local interests. The decisive body of a public endowment is a board of trustees in all cases. Reports on their activities and tenders are generally published through local channels. These tenders, among others, promote personality- and community-building programmes, spare-time activity groups in student dormitories, sport clubs and student councils; and provide an opportunity to participate in pedagogical research for schools that are otherwise unable to join pedagogical studies for financial reasons. The tenders also help the preservation and proliferation of local values, history and traditions as well as the establishment of active local patriotism.

In the second half of the 1990s the Soros Foundation contributed to the improvement of Hungarian public education with over 1 billion HUF per year. The Programme for the Development of Public Education, launched in 1994, played a key role in making public education more dynamic. It operated 35 programme divisions in 1998, each with funds for tenders between 1 million and 200 million HUF. The supporting strategies of the fund were based on the following principles:

- support for the education and schooling of underprivileged groups, especially underprivileged minorities;
- special support for associations and initiatives aiding teachers' work;
- support for the distribution of new equipment (especially of ICT).

The foundation did not take on funding the day-to-day operation of institutions and generally refused to support building, renovation and maintenance works.

### **Participation in the Educational Programmes of the European Union**

From the scholastic year of 1997/98 Hungary has been participating in the Socrates Programme (Comenius, Lingua, Arion). 588 163 Euro was allocated to public education institutions through tenders applied for in 1999. Out of the available 420 000 Euro for the aims of the Comenius 1 campaign (the establishment of international, multilateral school associations), a total of 416 450 Euro was applied for, which denotes a 99.15% utilisation rate. The 140 000 Euro of the campaigns entitled Comenius 2 and 3 (promotion of innovative initiatives; multicultural education; the education of children from special social backgrounds: Gypsies, immigrants and immigrant workers; the improvement of standards in teachers' in-service education) was applied for by institutions to the extent of approximately 120 000 Euro which shows an 80% utilisation of the programme.

Since September 1st, 1997 Hungary has been a full scale participant in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme which concerns the entirety of vocational education. In Hungary the Coordination Council serves as the decisive body of the programme. Within the scope of the Leonardo Programme, in 1997 Hungary coordinated 14 experimental projects, 57 Hungarian participants took part in experimental projects abroad and 23 Hungarian institutions were awarded with transfer support with the result of 231 individuals visiting 10 European countries. In 1998 14 projects took place under Hungarian control, 82 Hungarian institutions participated in foreign experimental projects and 37 of them won support for study trips abroad (311 individuals travelled to 9 countries of Europe).



# Chapter 6

## **The Inner World of Schools**

The inner world of schools cannot stay independent of the influences of the external world and it is often the tensions generated outside which are felt inside. Peculiar conflicts are generated by the fact that the subculture of the new generation is radically different from that of the teachers and the requirements towards the schools (on the behalf of parents, students, the labour market, the general public etc.) are of a rather complex nature.

### **6.1 CHANGES IN EDUCATION**

The appearance of new teaching content does have certain influence on the inner world of schools, on the practice of teaching and learning, in particular. The implementation of the National Core Curriculum has not yet resulted in a real breakthrough in the subject structure and the processes of learning-management. Traditional subjects have generally retained their supremacy. In the pedagogical work of many institutions, the traditionally hierarchical and rigid teacher-student relations remained dominant.

#### ***New Content in the Professional Work of Schools***

New content reflecting efforts for modernisation will take the shape of individual subjects in most cases, therefore, their effects on traditional subjects are somewhat limited. Most problematic, from this point of view, is Media Studies and Informatics, which have radically changed the acquisition and structure of knowledge, and teachers will also have to take another approach to 'teach' Knowledge of Mankind and Self Knowledge included in the Man and Society cultural domain.

Concerning content, Environmental Education is in the best position. A programme called Round Chain (Körlánc) is based on the cooperation of schools and their social environment. The programme aims to develop programmes and curricula focusing on the preservation of local environmental values via cooperation of local communities. There is an increasing nation-wide interest in the Bio-School Movement.

#### ***The Methodological Awareness of Teachers***

It is generally observed that few teachers tend to pay enough attention to the knowledge being constructed in students' minds. Most teachers in fact prefer the traditional (frontal) teaching methods, hierarchy and learning-management processes. Other methods and structural forms are also to be found in schools; but the aim of handling children individually is given a rather narrow interpretation and most teachers think it is essentially nothing but paying attention to the two extreme strata of students, the best and the worst ones. This approach might result in

the majority of students being considered as 'middle-rate'. Differentiation including the whole range of students is currently relatively rare in schools. The moderate pace in the permeation of a cooperative approach is indicated by the fact that the project method does not seem to gain ground in Hungary.

### *Out-of-Class Responsibilities*

Teachers, aside from their in-class service, perform several other duties only indirectly related to education. The traditional role of schools expand into such fields as social care, transition into the world of work, the struggle against different forms of deviation, and other social problems. A dominant trend in the 1990s was to push these functions to the background, a trend explained, first of all, by the worsening financial situation of schools and their maintainers. In most places they were the very functions that have fallen victim to financial restrictions at the local and institutional level. The 1999 Amendment of the Public Education Act introduced several new changes in this respect which created more favourable conditions in regulation and financing to perform these duties and are expected to result in an increased awareness of these fields. Institutions with 300 students or more, for example, must employ spare-time managers from the year 2000. Other changes affect the employment of school librarians. The increasing governmental attention to the social functions of schools is reflected by the changes in subsidies. The most significant alteration in the budget of 2000 was a major enhancement of day-care and college normative support, and a new or increased contribution to help underprivileged students catch up.

Although one would expect extra payment for work done beyond one's duty, regulations concerning teachers' work support the recognition of out-of-class activities as pedagogical duties to only a limited extent. Teachers are expected to do certain organisational and social activities – organising the supervision of students, cultural and sport life in school, child and youth protection. In addition, teachers' weekly hours might include the performance of such duties as the participation in the creation of the school's educational programme or tasks related to student councils, cultural programmes and supervision over students.

Within the educational responsibilities reaching beyond in-class occupations, both the public opinion and teachers consider moral education to be of a high priority. Since 1998 the government policy also devotes distinguished attention to this priority. At the end of the past decade the professional debates on this topic occurred more and more frequently, partially due to government initiatives in this field. A number of various previously launched initiatives, started to gain ground at schools upon the implementation of the National Core Curriculum. Such initiatives include the school subject Knowledge of Mankind, child philosophy, discussion groups on case studies promoting ethical reflection, publications of teaching materials dealing with the relation of law and ethics (translations of modern western pedagogical works), and last but not least, initiatives to update religious studies at schools run by churches.

Responsibilities related to career orientation gain more and more significance. Today, career orientation and other activities aiding the students' choice of profession are not yet presented with due emphasis in Hungarian schools. The fact that the significance of career orientation is underestimated is probably reinforced by the puzzling nature of the labour market, with changes being unpredictable in the long run. This responsibility is presented in the National Core Curriculum both as a general requirement and as part of one of the cultural domains (Life-Management and Practical Studies), its realisation at schools, however, still remains partial. Career orientation in the broader sense should begin at the primary school level, but this

responsibility is often refused there. According to surveys carried out on a representative sample, 6% of teachers perform extracurricular duties related to career orientation. Career orientation is supposed to include the promotion of self-awareness as need be, but it is difficult to integrate it in today's school practices.

From the aspect of both education and welfare, day-care for pupils, successfully functioning in Hungary for decades, plays a distinguished role. They offer meals, help with the homework and take care of children after school classes. Pupils are supervised by teachers in the afternoon hours as well. Participation in the day-care is not obligatory, and though the daily one to three meals and/or the attendance are subject to a fee, for those in need, the services are, of course, free of charge. Day care also promotes learning, since the teacher has more time to convey the basic skills and thus might reduce the risk of drop-outs as well. This is especially important if the student arrives from a background which is not entirely cooperative towards the school.

Day-care for pupils is popular between the 1st and the 4th year of primary schools, in particular; and despite the radically diminishing number of school-age children the proportion of those pupils who take advantage of this service has been reduced only to a small extent. Simultaneously, the number of those taking meals in the school has radically increased. In certain counties over 20% more pupils take meals instead of requesting for day-care (Table 6.1).

*Table 6.1*

*Students taking meals and day-care in percentage of the total number of students per county, between 1980/81 and 1990/2000*

County	1980/81		1990/91		1997/98		1998/99	
	Day-care	Meals	Day-care	Meals	Day-care	Meals	Day-care	Meals
Bács-Kiskun	32.4	39.8	30.8	50.6	28.2	50.9	28.1	53.0
Baranya	40.7	49.5	38.5	55.5	31.9	54.1	32.1	55.7
Békés	41.5	44.8	44.4	58.4	40.9	59.1	40.4	58.9
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	30.4	37.0	30.6	48.0	26.5	48.0	26.7	49.2
Budapest	46.2	49.9	42.5	54.7	40.8	61.5	42.0	64.2
Csongrád	45.1	48.0	44.8	63.1	43.0	63.0	43.4	63.7
Fejér	32.4	42.3	27.5	51.7	27.5	48.9	28.4	50.3
Győr-Moson-Sopron	29.9	39.0	28.0	49.0	27.3	50.0	27.9	51.2
Hajdú-Bihar	36.3	40.7	44.8	62.3	44.3	66.4	45.4	68.2
Heves	36.2	41.2	38.0	50.4	34.5	50.7	34.6	51.3
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	42.3	45.9	41.7	54.4	32.3	48.7	32.6	48.5
Komárom-Esztergom	26.3	34.6	27.9	44.3	28.2	44.5	28.2	45.4
Nógrád	44.4	46.8	34.3	47.8	33.1	53.0	33.9	54.0
Pest	31.6	35.1	29.6	44.7	27.6	49.2	27.9	49.6
Somogy	42.5	54.0	43.3	66.1	42.6	67.1	43.9	69.7
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	37.6	43.4	39.1	58.2	37.9	60.4	38.9	63.3
Tolna	51.6	59.7	45.2	67.1	43.5	66.5	45.7	70.4
Vas	40.4	42.9	37.2	54.2	35.5	55.3	37.3	57.0
Veszprém	38.4	47.2	33.9	56.3	30.2	54.9	31.2	55.8
Zala	44.7	60.0	44.1	71.8	41.5	71.6	42.5	73.3
Average	38.2	46.3	37.2	54.5	34.7	56.0	35.3	57.5

Source: Statistics by the Ministry of Education; 1999/2000: calculations by Erika Garami

### *Changes in the Function of Class-masters*

From the point of view of social education class-masters play a traditionally distinguished role in Hungary. The functions of the class-master are undertaken in every class by a teacher otherwise teaching the class. These functions include giving independent Class-master's Classes (career orientation, reinforcement of community cohesion, life management, etc.), keeping contact with the parents, organising holiday camps and many other, therefore, they are regarded as being the utility men of education. The implementation of the National Core Curriculum created a new situation in this respect as well, since it is the first time in over 150 years that there is no central document prescribing the presence of class-master functions in schools. Though, partially owing to the cease of governmental orders, the emphasis on the traditional role of class-masters has been reduced, 90% of the schools still have Class-master's Classes.

## 6.2 INTERNAL RELATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

Relations within the teaching staff and the attitudes typical of each teacher play a key role with respect to the inner world of schools. From this respect, undoubtedly the implementation of the National Core Curriculum proved to be the most significant element. During the pedagogical programme designing process not only were innovative energies set free but the relations within the staff were altered in many senses as well. Teachers have participated in great numbers in work related to the preparation of the new documents.

### *The Effects of Local Planning*

In the preparation of their programmes, schools generally took two aspects. The starting-point of the first one was the total number of classes determined by the maintainer. The creation of the pedagogical programme, including the local curriculum, did not begin by determining the schedules and planned number of classes of each subject, but by the determination of the educational principles of the school, and a decision was reached on the basis of the defined emphasis and viewpoints of time-utilisation. The second approach considered the last valid curriculum, previous to the National Core Curriculum, as its starting point. The teaching staff – having compared it with the NAT – decided on fields needing certain alternations in content or structure according to the requirements defined in the document. In this case the changes considered to be necessary started from below and the teachers arrived at the demand for total class numbers by summarising the demands of each year and each domain. Thus the harmonisation with the maintainer could begin.

In the first case – usually at the beginning of the process – conflicts were likely to occur between directors and maintainers. While, in the case of the second approach, tensions could rise within the teachers' community by the time they agreed on a total number of classes per week. The fact that, along with the number of classes, the number of teaching positions decreased as well enhanced the teachers' worries for their job. Most school directors tended to take on conflicts with the maintainers rather than those within the school. In schools where the pedagogical programme was prepared on the grounds of a real cooperation the major positive experiences were signified by the improvement of professional communication, and the conscious examination of institutional procedures.

A widely observed phenomenon was that the significance of decisions of bodies have increased as opposed to the teachers' individual decisions. With respect to human relations the directors perceived conflicts in a greater proportion, however, those sensing positive effects outnumbered those perceiving negative ones from this aspect as well (Table 6.2).

*Table 6.2*

*The effects of the preparation of pedagogical programmes on the teaching staff according to the directors in different school types, 1998 (%)*

	Primary schools	Other schools	Total
<i>Effects on the professional development of the staff</i>			
No change detected	17.9	21.6	18.8
Mostly favourable effects	73.0	68.5	71.9
Mostly unfavourable effects	5.3	5.2	5.3
Hesitant	3.8	4.7	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Effects on human relations within the staff</i>			
No change detected	49.9	52.0	50.4
Mostly favourable effects	30.0	31.4	30.3
Mostly unfavourable effects	15.3	12.7	14.7
Hesitant	4.8	3.9	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Local Curriculum Survey, 1999

Question asked: 'In your opinion, how did the debates effect the professional development/human relations of the teaching staff?'

The preparations of the pedagogical programmes also tended to have a unique influence on cross-school cooperation, although the creation of the programmes usually remained a domestic affair within each school. Exceptions to this rule include the 92 schools that participated in the school project of individual self-improvement launched by the Soros Foundation. These institutions not only cooperated in the creation of the pedagogical programmes but the majority of them assumed to propagate the acquired knowledge in school analysis, evaluation and curriculum design within their own regions. The project reinforced the increasing significance of horizontal communication.

### *Internal Evaluation and Quality Assurance*

The creation of the pedagogical programmes presented a special challenge in respect to the institutions' internal evaluation and quality assurance. The documentation of the particular aims of the institutions further highlighted this question. The vast majority of schools do not have an internal evaluation system. On the other hand, however, a number of successful initiatives were launched in this field in the late 1990s. The key to the mystery lied in the fact, without exception, that quality assurance was built on year-long self-instructive activities and the selected model was to be adopted to the local conditions within the framework of a well planned organisation-development. In many cases, however, quality assurance is not an organic process built on the basis of local planning, rather it is motivated by the fulfilment of external requirements.

Creating a system of quality assurance poses a noteworthy challenge to schools and is likely to evoke new changes or even new conflicts among teachers. In many institutions, teachers will probably consider the increased discipline in documentation as a bureaucratic pressure. Quality assurance, however, entails the evaluation of the institutional functions, the achievement of the teachers and other employees is accompanied by their moral and financial recognition, as is proven by company quality assurance systems functioning all over Europe. The extensive introduction of quality assurance requires the employment of highly qualified experts who will assist in promoting the new approach in order to establish the schools' work and in the acquisition of the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge.

### ***Relations between Schools and Parents***

The relation of parents and schools has radically changed since the change of regime – at least, on the level of legislation. In theory, families have regained their full rights to educate their children, as they have been given an opportunity to become partners with individual rights and competencies. The enforcement of parental rights tends to evoke significant tensions and conflicts. A partner relation based on the grounds of mutual respect and trust is quite rare to be formed between parents and teachers. As it has been highlighted by the debates over the establishment of school boards: a number of teachers have sore feelings about the ways 'outsiders' may interfere with school life. On the other hand, parents with the ambition to frequently use their rights feel they are treated with strong reservations and aversion on behalf of the teachers, as if they had ventured into forbidden territory. In spite of these circumstances, school boards have been established and parents have a chance to participate in school life in all details through their representatives.

## **6.3 STUDENTS, STUDENT COMMUNITIES**

### ***New Trends in Youth Culture***

The role played by the school is being held in higher and higher esteem by the young, since they spend more and more time there which will practically determine their future careers. The youth are less and less controlled by their family, neighbourhood community and more and more by the consumer industry and the media. The value-system, role models and emerging standards of the youth is determined by this increased independence.

More expectations from the youth means longer school training. In the 1990s a new trend gained ground: the burdens on the young grew generally both inside and outside the school. According to a 1998 survey carried out in three major towns of different counties, among a full scope sample of 17-year old secondary school students, 37% were engaged in sport activities, 26% studied a foreign language and 22% had private tutors. The majority of these activities took place outside of school. From the aspect of out-of-class activities the students of vocational training schools are particularly passive. Apart from sports, their participation rate in other activities is generally below 10%. One major reason is probably that these occupations, having largely left the schools, have become subjects to fees.

The spare-time activities of students tend to leave the institutional frames reserved for the young by the family, school and adult society (cultural and youth community centres, local sport clubs) and is transferred into the businesslike leisure centres (aerobic, body building), places of entertainment (discos) and tertiary industries offering extreme sports.

### *The School Class*

School classes continue to play a key role in the socialisation of students and have a great influence on their general condition and state of mental hygiene. Surprisingly enough, the joy of togetherness and the amiability and helpfulness of the classmates are diminishing as time passes, and students of vocational training schools tend to feel more uneasy in their school than students of other secondary schools. Out of the 5 757 students participating in the Health-Behaviour Survey, 5% have complained about the great noise and mess in their school, 5% have been bullied by their classmates regularly and another 3% occasionally.

### *Student Rights*

In the 1990s the range of student rights greatly expanded which has also been reinforced on a legal level; it is a general observation, however, that the affected hardly know their individual or collective rights listed in the Public Education Act. A significant proportion of students do not possess the skills necessary to enforce their rights. At the same time, the majority of schools lack the relevant sufficient institutional conditions, and a new approach is still to be formed in order for students to become full-right participants of school democracies. In many cases student rights are only asserted in negligible questions.

By all means, one important measure of the values in a school-level democracy is the extent to which the students are included in the development of school regulations, and to which their opinions are asked for. Domestic rules, for instance, usually do not result from consent, rather they include a mixture of rules of legal and ethical nature.

### *The Mental Hygiene of Students*

The burdens weighing on students' shoulders keep growing despite the fact that the National Core Curriculum has made efforts to limit the weekly number of classes. Research results indicate that the number of those students who consider school tasks oppressive and feel that teachers and parents demand too much has increased since 1993. Nearly one third (31.1%) of the participants have held this opinion. Poor achievement at school and the appearance of learning difficulties denote early signs of menaces for mental health. Partial weaknesses of skills (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) are not uncommon to remain hidden at school. The lack or delay of assistance might develop secondary personality disorders. According to the statistics, every sixth student has developed some sort of personality disorder in need of correction or therapy. Approximately 20% of children attending schools in Hungary are in one way or another in danger. This fact denotes that one fifth of the child and adolescent population, above all the most vulnerable – under the aegis of primary prevention – should be worthy of distinguished attention.

Data collected from nation-wide representative samples have been available since 1986 on the health-related habits of 11–17-year old adolescents. Survey results (1986, 1990, 1993, 1997) demonstrate that, among the health threatening habits of the young, the attempts at smoking and drinking alcohol have been made at an increasingly younger age. The number of those students who devote much of their spare-time (minimum four hours a day) to watching television shows an constantly increasing rate. Only one third of the young practice a physical-



ly active life-style in their free time (on 3-4 occasions and over 6-7 hours per week for sports), the physical activities of another third barely reaches an acceptable level, however, the physical activities of the remaining third is unsatisfactory (the students belonging here do not practice sports more than once a week, if at all). The majority of physically inactive students consist of girls and vocational training school students. 28-30% of students of 15 years of age (boys in a slightly higher proportion) and half of 17-year old students (vocational training school students in a somewhat higher proportion) declared to have or have had sexual relationships, and only 40% of the sexually active adolescents gave an account of using condoms.

A 1995 research involving 17 085 Hungarian secondary school students revealed that 5.2% of them have tried a variety of drugs; 7.2% have used alcohol and medication together; and 4.2% have used marihuana and hashish. Experts, however, give a much higher estimate of those who have tried at one point of time some kind of narcotics. Vocational training school students tend to fall into the threatened group due to their habits of smoking, consuming alcohol and drugs; also, due to their early sexual activity, and to their negative concept on life (claimed worse health conditions, general conditions and more frequent psychosomatic symptoms).

### *Child and Youth Protection*

The Child Protection Act issued in November, 1997 precisely outlines the tasks of the official responsible for child protection, and declares that all teachers and class-masters have to be active participants in the protection of children. Schools, as scenes of prevention, should hold responsibility for the detection of the reasons which place the children's development at risk and the application of pedagogical means to prevent and counteract harmful effects; and, if necessary, to take steps to prevent or solve the problems.

The situation has been changing at a slower pace than expected and needed since the implementation of the Act. Observations generally show that the necessary conditions are not provided for in the majority of schools. The task of child protection is interpreted as paperwork and it is usually assigned to a staff member of the school. The fulfilment of legal, pedagogical, psychological and sociological requirements, necessary for child and youth protection, is not demanded for in reality.

For the present, schools appear unable to handle crisis. According to common observations, the majority of schools endeavour to rid themselves of the problematic child or family as soon as possible, finding excuses in lack of experts, capacity and competence; or actually referring to the interests of the community of children and the school. The freedom in school selection, the demographic ebb, the direct interest of the schools to ensure the highest possible number of students are certainly all factors which increase the interest for the majority of institutions not to assume responsibility for child and youth protection. A relevant study claims that the increasingly frustrated schools – due to the pressure for achievement – instead of attempting to bridge the gap between this underprivileged, unfortunately ever increasing mass of children, first send them to the back row, both in a practical and abstract sense, than let them leave the school.

The network of school psychologists, whose establishment was launched only in the mid-1980s, is struggling with a number of problems in approach and in everyday practice. At the end of the 1990s merely 120 psychologists practised their service as listed employees in schools.

Educational Counselling Services – as independent professional organisations – function effectively. This kind of service is usually consulted for ability and talent testing or in case of learning difficulties. Educational counselling has become more intensive in the past 10 years, with the number of clients in Budapest having doubled, from 11 784 to 22 455. Consulting a family pedagogue has not gained ground yet, neither has the recognition of other social experts. The Child Protection Act attempts to solve the problem with the establishment of Child Welfare Services to be organised in every community. These services are in charge of finding and summoning all the competent experts in the interest of each child in need of help. Today, child welfare services can only partially live up to these expectations. The effective operation is hindered by the insufficient number of experts and by the lack of time and money. In most communities local GPs, paediatricians, visiting nurses, teachers and local government officials are available for the service. On the other hand, unfortunately, only a few communities have readily available psychologists, teachers for the handicapped, developing teachers or child protection organisations.

# Chapter 7

## Teachers

### 7.1 EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

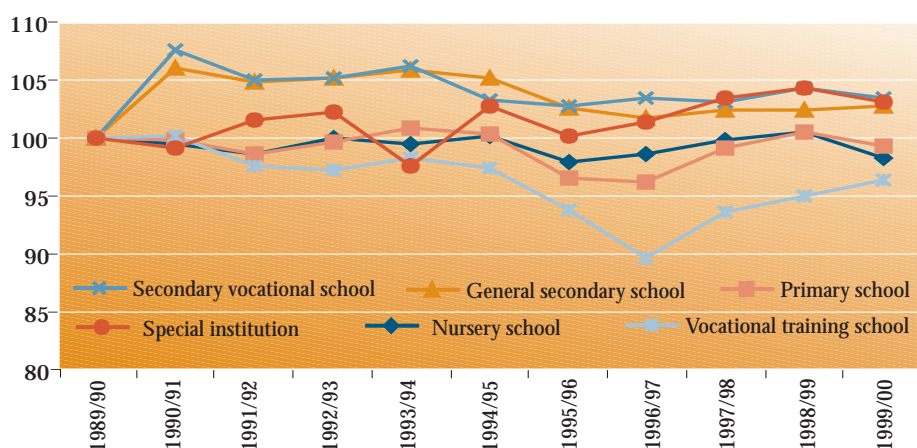
After passing the law on statutory rights of public servants in 1992, Hungary's legislative practice regarding the teaching profession conformed with general European standards. Nevertheless, the practice of employment, dismissal and waging of teachers remained one of the most controversial issues in the economic, administrative and pedagogical processes following the change of regime. One of the reasons behind all this can be found outside the educational system, in the income gap conditions between the public and the private sector. Although it is true that the gap between the two sectors is natural in all economies, it is the width of the gap which is strikingly large in Hungary (and usually in the young democracies of East-Central Europe). Another reason behind the controversy is that the uniform rights of employed teachers laid down in the law mentioned above came to power in a system of shared responsibility. On the one hand, the establishment of the terms of employment and waging for teachers and other school staff, and the continuous updating of these terms applies to a wider public servant sector. On the other hand, as a result of independent financial management and the right, in most schools, to independent financial status, there is no direct connection between central wage-regulation, educational state-funds and local employment and waging decisions.

The so-called normative funding system, set up in 1990, basically links the allocation for education in the budget (and thus wage-costs) to trends in the number of students, but the schooling age population dropped drastically in the nineties due to demographic reasons. At the same time, the Hungarian education system lived the days of expansion in a wide variety of forms. Aside from and despite of decreasing student numbers, the number of educational institutions grew, due to the termination of the state monopoly on schools and to the transfer of the schools' ownership to local governments. At the end of the nineties students spent more time in the education system. The number of people employed in education did not change significantly between 1990 and 1997, whereas the total number of people employed in the national economy dropped almost by 30% (about 1.5 million people) during the same period. As a result, there were 248 152 people employed in education in 1999. (This number includes the 44 013 physical workforce employed in the education branch, who make up 17.7% of the total.) In Hungary the index measuring the employment of teachers was very impressive even on an international scale. In 1995 Hungary was ranked first among 18 OECD countries with 4.2% of the total labour force being primary and secondary teachers. The number of teachers required in education is basically a question of student numbers. The unfavourable demographic processes of the nineties were reflected in the data on student numbers: the populous generations born between 1974 and 1978 have already left secondary education by now, and as a result of low birth rates in the eighties and nineties the size of schooling-age population is constantly shrinking. The total number of children attending nursery schools and schools, and that

of employed teachers have all decreased in the nineties. Apart from the general decline, only in secondary education (general and vocational schools) have student and teacher numbers grown. This is partly the result of a shift of proportions in secondary education (the powerful and continuous decrease of student and teacher numbers in all vocational training schools), and partly due to the growing number of students and teachers, compared to previous decades, in secondary institutions that grant the school-leaving exam (taken at the age of 17-18). The decrease of teacher numbers (except for nursery education) has been somewhat smaller than that of student numbers throughout the whole period, whereas the increase of teacher numbers in secondary schools has been somewhat greater than that of student numbers (Fig. 7.1).

*Figure 7.1*

*Changes in teacher numbers in the various institution types (previous year = 100%)*



Source: OM Educational Statistics; KSH Educational data 1999/2000  
(Preliminary data)

In comparison with international trends, not only the rate of teachers compared to employment in general, but that of teachers compared to students is also high. In 1998, for example, in all of the 19 OECD countries surveyed, the student per teacher rate in primary level education was the lowest in Hungary (Appendix). (However, it is important to note that if we exclude day-care service teachers, who look after children in the afternoon in the school, the student per teacher rate nears international trends.) The index for the number of lessons is also impressive on an international level. Regarding the annual total number of lessons given by full-time employed teachers on the level of education corresponding to upper-primary school, the state of affairs in Hungary is only more favourable in comparison to Turkey, Korea and Spain, where lesson numbers are strikingly low. Although it is worthwhile to treat these international comparative indices with care, the relatively small size of the workload of Hungarian teachers, measured by the average student and lesson numbers per teacher, is remarkable. On the one hand, the numbers indicated by the indices are the remnants of the ternary system of the socialist state: full-time employment, low wages and low efficiency. On the other hand, they are the unintended by-products of new efforts in expanding the educational system in the nineties. They are nevertheless a red light, signalling the problems of efficiency in the employment of teachers on a national level.

## 7.2 THE COMPOSITION AND STRATIFICATION OF THE PROFESSION

The teaching profession, with its one-hundred and fifty thousand members, is fairly heterogeneous in terms of education, school type, geographical location of the school, degree subject, gender, age, professional competence and beliefs.

It can be said in regards to qualifications, that on the whole, apart from the 2% decrease in total teacher numbers no considerable re-stratification took place between the 1989/1990 and 1999/2000 school years (Table 7.1). According to the evidence of the data, the level of qualification rose in general: the number of teachers with only intermediate level nursery teaching qualifications and that of teachers without any teaching qualifications dropped considerably. As for larger professional groups, the number of teachers qualified for vocational education decreased significantly, and a smaller decrease may be observed in the number of lower and upper primary level teachers. In contrast, the number of teachers qualified in other categories, such as teachers of handicapped children, higher level nursery teachers and secondary level teachers, is growing.

*Table 7.1*

*Qualification of teachers and changes in teacher numbers, 1989/90–1999/2000*

Teacher qualification	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	1989/90 =100%
Intermediate nursery	7 539	6 324	6 758	6 162	5 663	5 202	4 756	3 647	2 232	1 738	1 434	19.0
Higher level nursery	25 413	25 668	25 625	26 131	26 341	26 750	26 569	27 200	28 526	29 292	29 117	114.6
Lower primary school	39 183	35 521	38 528	38 392	38 405	38 603	37 481	36 212	35 961	36 069	36 101	92.1
Primary school	46 989	56 118	48 157	47 948	48 833	49 040	47 588	45 808	45 030	45 088	44 566	94.8
Secondary school	22 089	24 415	23 926	24 741	25 793	26 523	26 938	27 301	27 695	29 014	29 919	135.5
Other teacher	8 147	4 788	7 314	7 477	7 935	8 363	7 918	7 304	8 045	8 321	8 699	106.8
Other qualification	7 740	8 184	6 277	6 377	7 912	8 141	7 037	6 203	5 177	4 828	4 377	56.6
Vocational training	4 030	nd	3 875	3 849	4 204	4 167	3 990	3 726	3 511	3 286	3 134	77.8
Special needs	3 896	3 878	3 878	3 955	3 994	4 044	4 136	4 062	4 132	4 256	4 230	108.6
Unqualified	883	1 643	776	847	807	838	800	834	806	659	572	64.8
Total	165 909	166 539	165 114	165 879	169 887	171 671	167 213	162 297	161 115	162 551	162 149	97.7

Source: OM Educational Statistics. The data on the last two years from OM Educational Statistics, 1998/99 and 1999/2000, calculated by Zsófia Szép and Mrs László Szalay

The proportion of different qualifications within institution types also changed fundamentally (Table 7.2 on the next page). In nursery schools, between 1990/91 and 1999/2000, the number of nursery teachers with higher level qualifications grew by 13%, whereas that of teachers with intermediate level qualifications and unqualified teachers dropped by almost 80% and 65% respectively. In primary schools, simultaneously with the 8.5% decline in total teacher numbers, the number of lower-primary teachers rose by 2% and the number of upper-primary and unqualified teachers was reduced by 15% and 47% respectively.

Table 7.2

*Institution types and the qualifications of full-time employed teachers in public education*

	School year						1998/99
	1990/91	1993/94	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	(percentage of 1990/91)
Nursery school							
Higher level nursery school teacher	25 668	26 341	27 200	28 526	29 292	29 117	113.4
Intermediate level nursery school	6 324	5 663	3 647	2 232	1 738	1 434	22.7
Other teacher		146	210	284	297	286	0.0
Other qualification*	1 643	807	834	806	659	572	34.8
Total	33 635	32 957	31 891	31 848	31 986	31 409	93.4
Primary school							
Lower-primary school teacher	35 521	38 405	36 212	35 961	36 069	36 101	101.6
Primary school teacher	52 461	49 259	46 083	45 054	45 254	44 596	85.0
Other teacher	592	418	244	802	977	1 111	187.7
Other qualification	1 937	1 573	1 119	1 087	1 104	1 021	52.7
Total	90 511	89 655	83 658	82 904	83 404	82 829	91.5
General secondary school							
Secondary school teacher	9 121	10 786	11 674	11 831	12 085	12 494	137.0
Primary school teacher	989	1 009	1 287	1 462	1 551	1 502	151.9
Other teacher	24	83	102	78	87	90	108.4 ***
Other qualification	112	73	70	80	63	69	61.6
Total	10 246	11 951	13 133	13 451	13 786	14 155	138.2
Secondary vocational school							
Secondary school teacher	7 405	7 459	8 498	8 746	9 438	9 965	134.6
Primary school teacher	3 025	1 500	1 835	2 108	2 227	2 318	76.6
Other teacher	224	4 121	4 462	4 500	4 450	4 487	108.7 ***
Other qualification**	2 002	1 782	1 534	1 475	1 452	1 392	72.5
Total	12 656	14 862	16 329	16 829	17 567	18 162	143.5
Vocational training school							
Secondary school teacher	2 165	1 646	1 288	1 230	1 300	1 267	58.5
Primary school teacher	3 900	2 202	1 847	1 808	1 768	1 887	45.3
Other teacher	149	1 894	1 757	1 625	1 560	1 568	82.8 ***
Other qualification**	724	631	400	355	313	280	38.7
Teacher of all subjects	6 938	6 373	5 292	5 018	4 941	5 002	72.1

Source: OM Educational Statistics, calculated by Zsófia Szép and Mrs László Szalay

\* Includes teachers employed as unqualified and teachers with other qualifications in 1990, and only includes teachers with other qualifications from 1991.

\*\* Includes the number of teachers employed without higher professional and teaching qualifications and trade workers employed as teachers.

\*\*\* Because of the striking differences in the 1990/91 data, these are the 1999/2000 data and 1993/94 data compared.

In secondary general education the number of teachers grew steadily (38%) in general. The number of teachers with secondary level qualifications shows a smaller (37%) and that of teachers with upper-primary qualifications a greater growth (52%), with the number of unqualified teachers being significantly reduced. In secondary vocational training the number of teachers rose by 44%: the number of teachers with upper-primary qualifications fell by 23% and that of teachers with secondary level qualifications rose by a greater 35%. The number of teachers qualified in other categories also grew considerably.

Due to decreasing student numbers teachers already in the profession have an advantage over those about to enter, as a result of the decline in the need for labour supply. In spite of this, the average age of Hungarian teachers is lower than in most European countries. One of the reasons behind this is the former pension scheme, still in practice in the middle of the decade, which specified the retirement age for women at 55, i.e. the age limit was quite low compared to the rest of Europe. Another reason, in close connection with this, is probably the high proportion of women in the Hungarian teaching profession, another striking difference to international trends (Table 7.3 on the next page). Women are outnumbering men on almost all school levels and school types. The only exception is the 54% rate of male teachers in institutions offering purely vocational training (secondary vocational and/or vocational training schools).

Evidence of the differentiation of professional roles is shown by the process of establishing professional organisations, which has begun in the nineties. In the beginning of 1999, the Ministry of Education had 117 professional organisations in the register. The main types are as follows: subject-teacher organisations, different bodies for the separate educational levels or functions, organisations formed on ideological bases, associations serving special student needs or special education-policy aims, movements and organisations for the education of the young, chambers, and local or regional associations. Sixteen percent of teachers are members of one professional organisation or another, with the vast majority registered in subject-teacher associations.

Simultaneously with the formation of new trade unions, the trade union activity of teachers underwent a significant transformation after the change of regime. In primary and secondary education the Trade Union for Teachers (PSZ) and the Trade Union for Hungarian Public Education and Professional Training are representative organisations, together with the Trade Union for Hungarian Musicians and Dancers, which represents a narrower segment. These are organisations entitled to represent teachers in national consultative bodies, but other trade unions are also invited to these sessions, such as the Democratic Trade Union for Teachers (PDSZ), which was established at the time of the change of regime. 49% of teachers are members of one trade union or other, with most of them (42%) registered in the Trade Union for Teachers.

The total number of those employed in education but not in the line of teaching was 98 402 in local-government maintained institutions in May of 1999, and their number in proportion to teachers was 65%. According to a survey taken on a representative school-sample in 1997, 44% of schools employed professionals to directly facilitate teaching. The need for such colleagues is growing. The number of individuals not employed in the line of teaching went well beyond the OECD average in 1994. At the same time, there is a shortage of workforce for completing certain non-teaching tasks (such as organising extra-curricular activities).



*Table 7.3**Proportion of female teachers in education in the OECD countries, 1995 (%)*

Country	Primary and lower-secondary level	Upper-secondary level
Hungary	84	55
Italy	84	55
United States	78	50
Sweden	73	42
Austria	72	49
United Kingdom	70	nd
New-Zealand	69	48
Finland	68	nd
Belgium (Flemish parts)	67	44
Spain	66	48
Denmark	58	45
Greece	58	46
Norway	58	32
Korea	56	25
Germany	52	24
Japan	51	24
Turkey	43	40
National averages	65	42

Source: Education at a Glance, 1998

## 7.3 EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND WAGING

Although the teaching profession was much less struck by unemployment in the nineties than the rest of the national economy, unemployment did appear in the circles of qualified teachers. The rate of unemployed teachers compared to those employed did not at any point go beyond the average rate of unemployment amongst the highly qualified. Their number shows a declining tendency in the surveyed past two years. The changes are in accordance with the movement of the large student intake of the populous generations of 1974 to 1978. The rate of retirement has increased in all educational institutions in the middle of the decade, but the number of people leaving for 'other reasons', thus probably quitting the profession or the type of institution, is generally larger. This tendency is stronger in secondary institutions, and extremely high in vocational training. The rate of graduates entering the profession from regular teacher training has been fairly low throughout the decade, regardless of institution types.

### *Local Employment Policies*

Since the legislation on the employment of teachers and other school staff is guided by the principle of shared responsibilities, local and institutional features have a significant role within the general tendencies of employment. The results of a survey on a representative sample indicate, for example, that the rate of teachers within the staff was 73 percent on average, but the spread was between 28 and 100 percent. According to data from the same survey, permanent teaching posts were discontinued in 49 percent of the schools, and new posts were taken in 59 per-

cent of them between 1994 and 1997. The decrease was more characteristic of towns in the countryside, of large schools rather than small ones, and of schools maintained by local governments rather than private or denominational schools. Local employment practices also differ in the case of part-timers and guest teachers. The tendency is that guest and part-time teachers are employed at secondary level, usually in cities and in larger schools. This type of employment is especially frequent in non-government funded institutions.

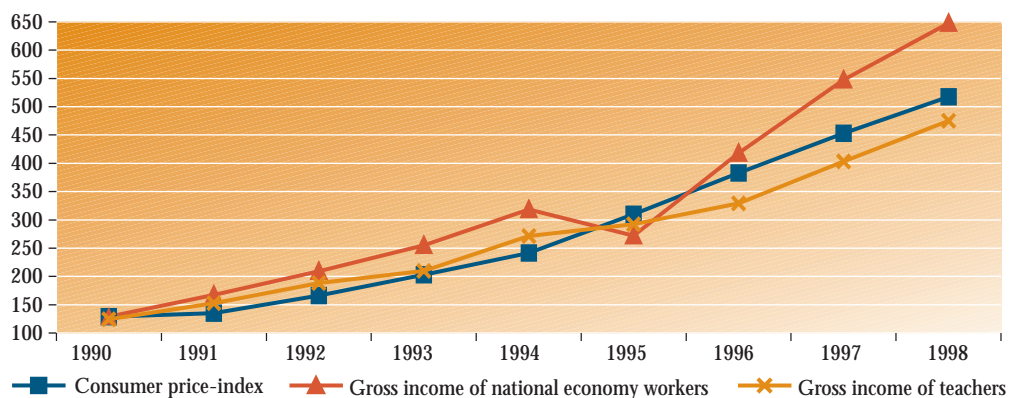
Management of the number of employed teachers is only relevant in the case of larger schools. The smaller the school, the more likely that despite changes in student numbers teacher numbers remain intact. The influence of changing student numbers on teacher numbers is the least apparent in village schools. The larger the settlement, the more probable it is for a decrease in student numbers to mean a simultaneous decrease in the number of teachers. The expenditure-per-student rate increased most in schools where both student and teacher numbers had dropped.

### *Income Trends*

The pace of income rise in the public sector has been lagging behind that of the competitive sector throughout the nineties. The income gap between the two spheres kept widening. The income of those employed in the budget sphere was 62.5 percent of the income of workers in the private sector in 1999. The relative income lag, similarly to earlier years, was the largest in the educational branch (48%) and the smallest in the executive and social security branches (23%). The 37% income lag, representing the whole of the budget sector, is considerably higher than in EU countries. This cannot be compensated for by the advantages of the public sector (higher employment safety, occasional flexibility of the work schedule, favourable distribution of work and free time). In the second part of the decade (until 1998) not only had the gap between the national average income and that of teachers widened, but this time it did not even keep pace with the rise of the consumer price index (Fig. 7.2 and Table 7.4 on the next page). Whereas the average income of educational workers in developed countries is 20 to 30% higher than the national average, it is 10-15% lower in the Central-European region, and in Hungary as well.

*Figure 7.2*

*The consumer price-index, and the gross income of full-time employed teachers and workers employed in public education between 1990 and 1999 (1989=100%)*



Source: Data from the Waging Department of the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, 1999

*Table 7.4*

*The consumer price-index, and the gross income of full-time employed teachers and workers employed in public education between 1990 and 1999\**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Consumer price-index**	128.9	135.0	166.1	203.5	241.8	309.7	383.2	453.3	517.7	569.5
Gross income of national economy workers	128.6	167.2	209.1	255.0	318.5	272.0	417.9	547.8	648.0	738.2
Gross income of public education workers	124.2	152.6	188.1	209.7	271.4	292.3	329.1	403.5	474.9	540.1

Source: Data from the Waging Department of the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, 1999

\* Data for 1990 is calculated from the annual percentages for 1989, and from 1991 they are calculated from the base-data of 1990.

\*\*Data calculated from the percentages in 1989.

One attempt was made at wage-correction in the educational sector in 1999. The waging of branches typically financed from the state budget increased the most in the educational sector, and least in health care. According to data gathered by the Ministry of Education, salaries in the teaching sector rose by 16.2 percent on a national average between December 1998 and April 1999, whereas only by 12.5% in the rest of the public sector.

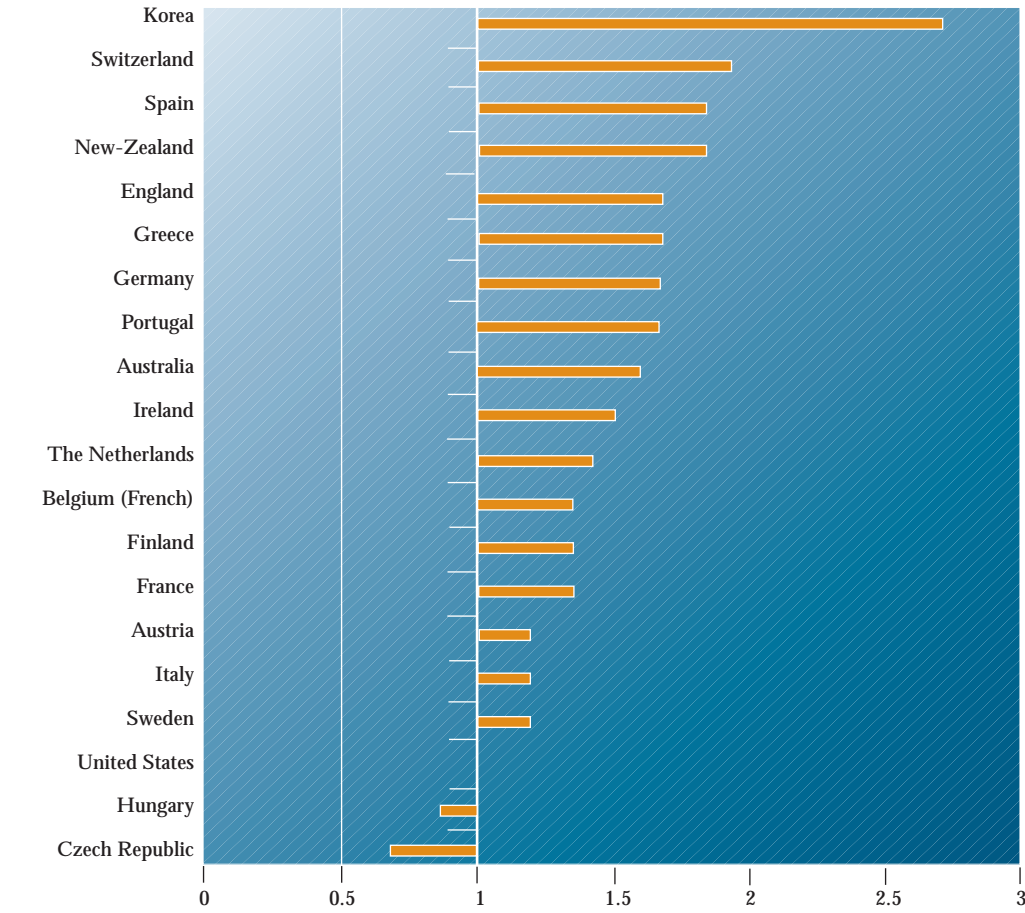
In the annual international analyses of the OECD, from the indices which are relevant for comparison, the index which eliminates the differences in economic development between different countries is relevant, as it presents teachers' wages compared to the GDP per capita. According to this index, Hungarian teachers occupy a very unfavourable position on all levels of education in terms of beginning salary, the rate only being worse in the case of teachers in the Czech Republic. Although the national average of beginning salaries is above the GDP in almost every country, in Hungary and in the Czech Republic they only constitute one half to two-thirds of this amount (Fig. 7.3).

If we compare salaries in terms of purchasing power parity (i.e. we take economic development into account), it may be deduced that, from the countries included in the survey, the annual salary of a beginning primary level teacher was the lowest in Hungary (USD 5 987) and the highest in Switzerland (USD 32 391) in 1998. From the countries listed the non-weighted average is USD 20 530, which means that the average teacher's salary in Hungary makes up less than one-third of the average. In order to reach the highest wage category teachers have to work for 30 years at primary and 26 years at secondary and tertiary levels in the countries examined, whereas in Hungary they need to wait further 10 to 14 years (which adds up to a total of 40 years on each level) to become the best paid members of their profession.

The wage of teachers per lesson only demonstrates the costs of education indirectly, but these statistics indicate whether teachers are employed as a relatively cheap or expensive workforce in education. From this aspect, teaching workforce is clearly the cheapest in the two Central-European countries included in the list of data (Hungary and the Czech Republic): USD 13, 13 and 16 at primary, secondary and tertiary levels respectively in the latter, and USD 15, 20 and 20 in Hungary for one lesson, compared to the average of USD 35, 43 and 52. In comparison with European Union countries, the relative income lag of Hungarian teachers is extremely high, and clearly greater than the difference of economic performance compared to EU standards. There are no obligatory regulations in the European Community dealing with wage-standards and the system of wage-calculation, but meeting the community requirement which gives 'the right to reasonable wages' might raise concerns, as a result of the fact that the minimum wage is low even compared to average Hungarian wages. At the same time, we

should bear in mind the problems of efficiency, suggested by data on the number of teachers and their workload. The salaries laid down in the book are supplemented by a series of extras both in the Hungarian and international practice. The total sum of extras in Hungary, depending on the institution and on the educational level, made up 12 to 16% of salaries on average.

*Figure 7.3*  
*The GDP per capita and the salaries of teachers with a 15-year-experience in lower-secondary levels (corresponds to upper-primary level) education in the OECD countries, 1998*



Source: Education at a Glance, 2000

## 7.4 THE PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHERS AND STAFF CULTURE

In the nineties relatively little attention has been paid to the transformation process of pedagogical activities. In the previous decades there seemed to be no need for research in this area. According to research based on interviews, carried out in 1998 and 1999 on a sample of one hundred teachers, 91% of teachers face difficulties when teaching. The possible reasons men-

tioned, were students' lack of motivation and discipline, their failure to prepare for lessons, family background and the content of the curriculum. Teachers ascribe great significance to teaching methods in successful teaching. Although they are acquainted with a variety of methods, basically most of them use methods labelled as traditional (explanation, discussion, visuals). At the same time, at least two-thirds of those interviewed use group-work, student presentations, lectures, debates and games, even if other work-modes are rarely in use.

Within each field of pedagogical knowledge (education, teaching, attitude to students, planning, differentiation, teaching methods, evaluation) we may distinguish between views held by strong teacher groups, mostly along the lines of school types, the subjects they teach, their sex and their experience as teachers. Adopting a normative attitude to education, emphasising the positive role of school, and approaching teaching and school-related problems from a teacher and situation-centred point of view are all important features of the pedagogical knowledge of teachers. As shown by everyday experience, there are different staff cultures and every school has its own atmosphere. It is likely that crucial changes in the nineties and the growing abundance on the school market have intensified the differentiation of staffs, and have resulted in the strengthening of these differences.

Schools typically vary as to how they prepare their pedagogical programme, the question being whether certain tasks (curriculum design, writing lesson plans, situation analysis, wording the pedagogical curriculum) were performed by more than one teacher, or to what degree had they become specialised in carrying out certain tasks. It seems that if a school is located in a larger settlement, it possesses a greater number of students and better infrastructure, it is more likely to carry out different tasks by sharing the duties, in other words, given the above listed circumstances, the rate of schools where every teacher is equally involved in all tasks is smaller. This is particularly interesting in the case of lesson planning for example, where a clear-cut hierarchy may be observed: the larger the host city of schools, the more of them involve teachers exclusively working on lesson planning. Creating pedagogical curricula has had a significant effect on the inner dynamics of staffs. In medium-sized and larger schools more or less the same number of discussions evolved around the pedagogical curriculum, whereas few instances of this were reported from smaller schools.

## 7.5 TRAINING FOR THE PROFESSION

Training for the teaching profession is gradually becoming one with the concept that learning is a lifelong process, which is a permeating notion in the main tier of training, in-service trainee instruction and teacher training programmes. Indications of this tendency may be observed in the various educational systems and in everyday practices, but today's reality is better characterised by the institutional, organisational and theoretical differences between training and in-service training centres, and by the lack of in-service introduction of beginner teachers into the profession.

### *Changes in Teacher Training*

Changes in the numbers of teacher trainees are largely determined by the processes which take place in higher education. The most striking process is the dynamic increase of student numbers in the 90s. From 1980 to 1995 the number of students registered for full-time training in

higher education doubled, and the number rose further each year towards the end of the decade. Although the increase has been steady from 1996 on, the demographic decline will slowly freeze the extensive development of the higher education system.

The decrease in the number of students leaving secondary school has gone hand in hand with the drop in the number of students entering teacher training, but the scale of the latter was far greater: 41.5% of all students applying for admission into higher education intended to continue their studies within the domain of teacher training in 1995, but the rate had dropped to 32.7% by 1999. The rate of full-time students entering teacher training therefore went down from 35% in the early 90s to 26% in the 1999/2000 school year. The rate is high compared to international standards, but also high in comparison with the labour force needs of public education. The number of graduating students is always around 15 000, which is three times the number of vacancies in the public education system. The problem of oversupply in training has not yet caused problems beyond control, since several professional fields may absorb qualified teachers to replace retiring labour force, and because a proportion of applicants only take 'teacher training' studies beside their chosen majors out of obligation from the beginning.

The most influential change in teacher training in the nineties was brought about by the 1994 government regulation, concerned with nursery and primary teacher training, and the 1997 regulation, concerned with the uniformity of teaching qualifications. The former increased the length of nursery teacher training to three, and primary teacher training to four years, and at the same time extended the training competence of teacher training colleges by adding the first two years of upper primary school to their field of operation. The preparation period for the introduction of the new training system gave rise to significant changes in the content of nursery and primary training. Teacher training colleges also initiated content-development, and the integration into higher education had a powerful effect on professional (pedagogical, psychological, methodological) training.

In the 90s lesson plans have begun to include more skill-development activities and tasks, i.e. the intention to develop teachers' pedagogical and personal skills strengthened. Several institutions implemented social, educational and applied psychology programmes, as well as special needs training. The same pursuit may be observed in pedagogy, as indicated by subjects such as educational and pedagogical-sociology, school pedagogy, special needs pedagogy and education-management. Within the Hungarian institutional system of teacher training, the fundamental concern is training qualified teachers (in nursery, primary and secondary teacher training), which means that organisational frameworks are more or less functional, fixed and very similar to each other in all institution types. On the university level there are other possible fundamental goals, therefore the educational role which the institution decides to take may be influential in the development of its internal organisational structure. As a result of institutional integration, ordained by the amendment made to the Higher Education Act in 1999, several colleges and universities will probably re-structure their teacher training programmes, which might occasionally initiate the establishment of teacher training faculties.

### *The Transformation of In-service Teacher Training Programmes*

Instead of in-service teacher training, today we more often speak of the 'professional development' of teachers, and aside from traditional training modes other training methods appeared, such as training courses, and school-based personal or staff-development training. In the domain



of in-service training, the greatest change in the nineties was brought about by the 1996 Amendment to the Public Education Act of 1993 and the corresponding regulation, which required teachers to take part in training programmes regularly, at least on a seven-year basis. It also compelled teachers to pass the post-professional exam, introduced with the regulation, if they are to continue their job (within set time limits). The legislation also laid down the financial conditions of the training system. Contrary to earlier practice, state funds for in-service training were directed to the schools, instead of the institutions offering the programmes. By drawing up five-year in-service training programmes, public educational institutions assert their institutional interests with respect to their pedagogical curriculum. Applications to the scheduled training programmes should be based on teachers' personal interests and individual professional ideas, and are annually acknowledged. As a part of the system, two bodies have been set up by the regulation. One is a permanent 'sister committee' to the National Public Education Council (OKNT), called National Pedagogical In-service Training and Accreditation Committee (PAB), which deals with rating teacher training courses. The other is the Methodology and Information Centre for In-service Teacher Training (PTMIK), whose task is secure the efficient operation of the system.

The Amendment to the Public Education Act in 1999 modified certain elements of in-service training: passing the post-professional examination was made optional, it only remained conditional for some posts (such as institution-management and different fields of expertise). It also ordained to place teachers with the post-professional exam in a higher category in the job hierarchy. The law discontinued the operation of the PAB, and its duties have been taken over by the Body of Pedagogical In-Service Training and Accreditation (PAT), set up by the Minister of Education. According to the 1997 regulation, preparatory activities for the post-professional exam may only take place in higher educational institutions, in specialised frameworks for teacher training. The requirements for qualification are stipulated by ministerial decree. At the same time, the Ministry of Education accredited the diplomas of some specialised training programmes as being equivalent to the post-professional exam (specialised programmes training participants to become public-education managers, educational administration experts, managing nursery teachers, pedagogical evaluation experts, and curriculum-design experts). The PhD degree and scientific degrees taken during specialisation, if related to the specialised qualifications conditional for the job, are also equivalent to the post-professional exam. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB), which is responsible for the accreditation of higher level post-professional training programmes, continuously evaluates the applications for setting up programmes that come from teacher training institutions.

As for training programmes, which do not provide post-professional qualifications, the Ministry of Education allowed higher educational institutions and pedagogical service providers to offer training courses for teachers and to accept the financing of these from the state budget. In the first round of accreditation, in the spring of 1998, more than 70 percent of submitted programmes were linked to the subject areas of NAT, which were concerned with the theoretical and methodological innovation of each subject. Apart from these, a significant number of training programmes tackled the issue of local curriculum-design and computer technology. The reason behind all this is that the most important changes in public education of the period were the implementation of NAT and the installation of the Sulinet-system. By January 1st, 2000 a further 1 064 programmes were given the green light. At the beginning of 2000 almost one-third of the programmes were offered by higher institutions (32%), and somewhat less (26%) by pedagogical service providers (Table 7.5). The list and information on programmes are regularly updated on the internet. The vast majority of the chosen training programmes were brief courses giving only certificates to participants.



Table 7.5

*In-service teacher training programmes and the institutions behind them, 1997, 1998, 2000*

Institution	1997		1998		January 2000	
	Number of programmes	% of all programmes	Number of programmes	% of all programmes	Number of programmes	% of all programmes
Higher educational institutions	2 090	38.0	704	39.1	341	32.0
Pedagogical provider institutions	2 310	42.0	432	24.0	277	26.0
Public educational institutions	165	3.0	112	6.2	89	8.4
Associations, professional organisations	165	3.0	144	8.0	119*	11.2*
Private businesses, economic organisations	385	7.0	263	14.6	168	15.8
Private funds	55	1.0	73	4.1	–	–
Other organisations	330	6.0	47	2.6	50	4.7
Private persons	–	–	25	1.4	20	1.9
Total	5 500	100.0	1 800	100.0	1 064	100.0

Source: 1997 and 1998, 1999 data: based on data from Mihaly Kocsis; January 2000: The Educational Journal 2000 first quarter; calculated by Márta Polinszky

\* Total of NGOs

# Chapter 8

## **The Quality and Success of Education**

Given the largely increased local and institutional independence in the nineties, issues concerning the quality and success of education were raised with more and more emphasis. The external monitoring of schools declined and standardised testing had not been introduced by the end of the decade. Different investigations indicated the fall of testing-based school performance, and the growth of the already present discrepancy between location and performance. Several international comparative analyses suggested that one of the weak points of Hungarian education is quality assurance. The concerns over the quality and success of education were only raised by the modification of regulations on content and the resulting transitional conditions.

As a result of these processes, an intense professional and social conversation evolved on the possible reasons of the inadequacy of quality and on the available government support in the interest of quality assurance. The aim to improve quality appeared in the election-campaigns in 1998, and the new government programme, passed in 1998, explicitly drew up plans to establish a system of quality assurance. The issue received special attention in the Amendment of the Public Education Act in 1999. At the same time there began a remarkable process of adaptation of quality assurance and evaluation tools already in use in other countries. The private sector had an increasing role in the development of the quality assurance system of public education, which was consciously backed by government policy. Most of the players are members of the professional sphere of education, and there is a smaller segment attached to the business rather than the public service sector in the quality assurance business.

Quality and success have always been important issues of public education. However, having accepted quality assurance as a key term in public education, Hungary has taken a significant step in the formation of views taken by the public on the success of education. Quality assurance, as a term, is used in two senses both in and outside Hungary. On one hand, it refers to organisational and management techniques on the institutional level, whilst on the other, it refers to all devices and mechanisms which serve to ensure the successful operation of public education as a whole. In judging quality and success, it is especially important how professional objectives are set, as these are referred to in the evaluation phase.

### **8.1 THE COMENIUS 2000 PROGRAMME**

The Ministry of Education initiated an independent quality assurance development scheme called Comenius 2000 in 1999. The scheme is based on a detailed professional concept, which differentiates between three models of quality assurance and quality development on both the institutional and local governmental levels. The first involves cooperative work-models, and the ability of providing the entailing self-evaluation and self-analysis. The second involves local-institutional adaptation of existing quality assurance systems and the improvement of structural-development abilities. The third involves the diffusion of ideas to other institutions (Table 8.1).

From the three models, the second deserves special attention, due to the fact that through its application, and with external professional support, the institutions and local governments can establish systems of quality assurance similar to the ones used in the business world and other public service sectors (ISO or TQM, for example).

*Table 8.1*

*Levels and models of the Comenius 2000 Scheme for Quality Assurance Development in Public Education*

Model	Institutional level	Maintainer's level
I	<i>Cooperative work-models</i> The institution, working together with its partners, conducts self-evaluation, and improves its activities indicated by the results.	<i>Communication and reaching consensus</i> The maintainer analyses its own terms in cooperation with the partners, and uses the results as the basis for its plans.
II	<i>Implementing total quality-management</i> The institution introduces one of the standardised quality assurance models.	<i>Total quality-management and cooperation</i> The maintainer initiates internal structural development and uses one of the standardised quality assurance models.
III	<i>The spreading of quality assurance</i> The institution helps other institutions develop their own quality assurance system.	<i>Creating encouraging environments</i> The maintainer helps foster the principle of quality-based operation, uses the appropriate encouragement techniques, and cooperates with other maintainers.

Source: The Comenius Scheme for..., 1999

In other areas there is less effort made to ensure the success and quality of public education. In the case of curricular programmes or, to use the more recent terminology, pedagogical systems, made available to schools, the problem of quality assurance has not been truly solved. Although there exist generally accepted requirements for textbooks, piloting and the publication of the results of piloting to teachers are both very rare. The development of item-banks in testing is an interesting initiation in connection with quality assurance. Concerning the success of evaluation, there is a growing need for reliable and quantifiable indicators to base the evaluation on. For example, Hungary is an active participant in the Indicators of Education Systems programme of the OECD, and in an indicator-development programme initiated by the European Union, based on the decision made by the Ministers of Education in Prague in 1998.

## 8.2 ACHIEVEMENT IN HUNGARIAN PUBLIC EDUCATION: THE RESULTS OF THE MONITOR SURVEY

From the indices of school achievement, student performance measured by standardised testing deserves special attention. Surveys on student performance based on standardised testing methods have been conducted in several examination centres for years. Data gathered from surveys based on sampling procedures are available retrospectively for several years, which makes it possible to analyse the chronological change of performance, and also allows for conclusions to be drawn in relation to the development of school-gained knowledge. Previously, surveys using standardised testing primarily gave information on the degree to which students had mastered the body of knowledge in a subject. Recent investigations, however, tend to target the sizing up of general competence, i.e. they put the emphasis on so-called instrumental knowledge instead of factual. Such series of surveys, called Monitor, have taken place on a regular two-year basis since 1986. One of their greatest advantage is that they provide an analysis which gauges performance in the comparison of allowed time.

### *Reading Comprehension*

The most important conclusion of the 1999 Monitor survey, as already indicated by 1997 data, is that the steady fall of reading comprehension results since 1986 has stopped. The overall results, denoted in standard scores and calculated together for both years, were similar in 1995 and 1999. As far as text-types are concerned, findings show that results were somewhat lower with document-type texts, and higher with the other two types and with general cognitive abilities. The favourable and unfavourable changes thus compensate each other, and on the whole, reading comprehension performance is basically identical with the results from four years ago.

### *Mathematics*

In the case of mathematical abilities the 1995 and 1999 Monitor surveys make comparison relevant in two domain parts, both in connection with applied mathematics: in performing algebraic-calculation and text-based tasks. In contrast with reading comprehension results, the 1999 results in this domain fell behind the 1995 results. Although the difference is little, statistically speaking, the trend raises concern. The spread of performance grew in mathematics as well.

### *ICT Skills and Attitudes*

In the case of ICT, the 1999 survey makes 1995 data comparable in two domain parts: in software-related and applied knowledge. Both domains present a significant improvement in performance: the standard scores of 1999 are 62.8 points higher on average than the 1995 scores. This reflects the effect of regular computer use and the widespread use of certain programmes and appliances. It also shows that interest in information technology has shifted to younger age groups, and that attitudes towards ICT have clearly changed in a positive way. For example, the average eighth grader (12-13 year olds) spends 5.5 hours a week in front of the computer by his own admission.

### *Natural Sciences*

The knowledge level of students in natural sciences (biology, physics, geology) has dropped to a smaller, yet significant degree. The decrease was larger in the case of biology and geology, which fell almost similarly, while this drop was somewhat smaller in the case of physics.

### *Civic Education*

Civic education and attitudes have been surveyed for the first time in the 1999 Monitor samples. The survey conducted with 14 year old students included 202 multiple choice questions. Of all the items, there were 38 cognitive questions on democracy and the economy, and 164 attitude questions on democracy and politics, national identity, social cohesion and divergence. Of all cognitive items, 26 were based on factual knowledge (correct answers spread between 40.1 to 88.9%) and 12 measured abilities (correct answers showed a smaller spread: 46.3 to 74.8%). It is typical feature that the majority of cognitive items where correct answers were below 50% were somehow related to the operation of the economy. This might lead to the conclusion that the students' economic knowledge is fairly unsteady, although analysis of the data also revealed some lingual-cultural correlation. There was an item on the non-democratic functioning of the state, which proved to be difficult, as only 43.3% of students marked the correct answer. The answers to attitude-

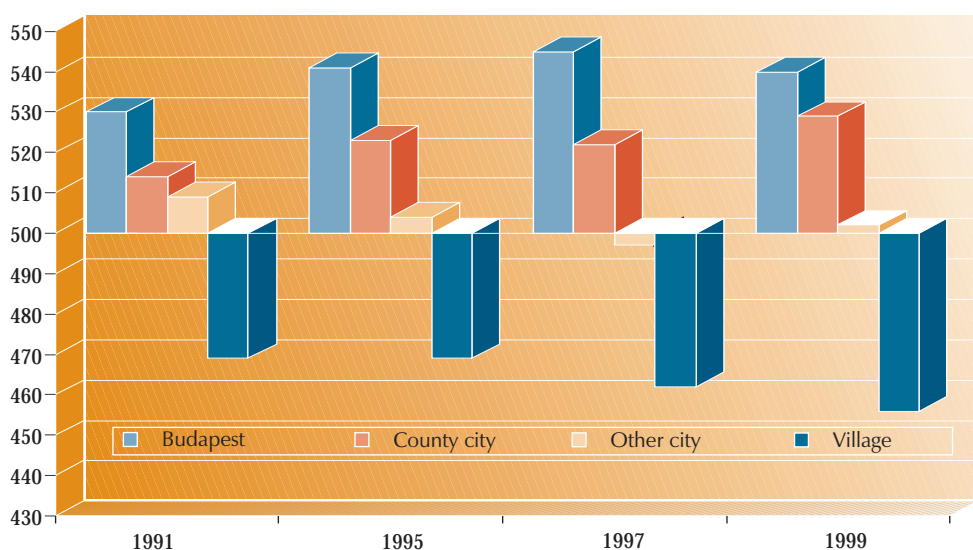
discovery items clearly indicated that for most young people, and very similarly to the adult population, democracy denotes a welfare state, and that within civic rights they consider social rights superior to political ones. Only 47.1% of students could answer the question: what activities of political organisations are illegal in a democratic state? The analysis of attitude-items raises the dilemma: to what degree do these answers reflect the efficiency and success of education, and to what degree do they merely show the personal choice of values of individual students?

### 8.3 FACTORS DETERMINING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Student performance largely depends on non-institutional factors, such as the place of residence, family background and the socio-economic features of the students' environment. The effect of these is particularly significant in Hungary. Therefore the surveys pay increasing attention to gathering and analysing so-called background-variables which might influence student performance. Of these variables, the settlement-type variable has received special attention in the nineties, since its analysis reflects the fact that the gap between city schools and rural schools is widening. The results of the 1999 Monitor survey indicated that the discrepancies between different settlement types have grown further towards the end of the decade. The previous distance between the capital and county cities seems to be closing, however, the falling of rural schools behind city schools is continuing (Fig. 8.1 and Table 8.2). Apart from this, the differences between the performance of student groups may be primarily explained by the qualification of parents. The difference between the performance of eighth-graders with parents of the lowest and the highest qualifications, measured in standard scores, reaches 20%, which is a lot higher than what we find in developed countries.

*Figure 8.1*

*The change in the standard scores of eighth-graders in reading and the types of settlement, 1991, 1995, 1997, and 1999*



Source: Monitor surveys

*Table 8.2*

*The change in the standard scores of eighth-graders in reading and mathematics and the types of settlement, 1991, 1995, 1997, and 1999*

Type of settlement	1991		1995		1997		1999	
	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics
Budapest	530	522	541	536	545	542	540	542
County city	514	509	523	523	522	518	529	526
Other city	509	507	504	502	497	497	502	498
Village	469	477	469	472	462	466	456	461

Source: Monitor surveys

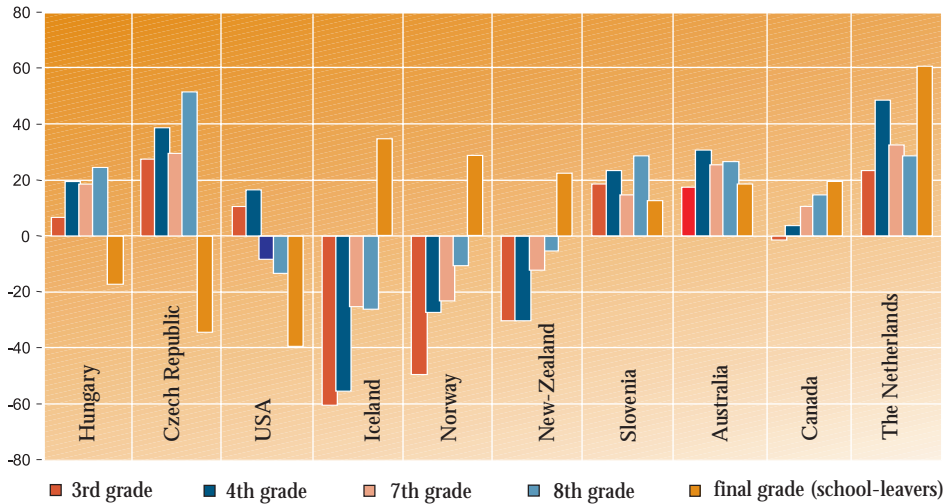
## 8.4 STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The international comparison of student performance may be based on the IEA TIMSS-survey of 1995. The survey examined 9 (third and fourth grade) and 13 year old students (seventh and eighth grade), and also school-leavers who leave public education once and for all. We shall now only pay attention to school-leavers. This category covers three groups: school-leavers of grammar and vocational schools (also called 12th graders in Hungary), and tenth-graders of vocational training schools (who, strictly speaking, do not belong to the category of school-leavers, but for whom public education has finished in the sense that in the last year they do not usually study general subjects.) Students involved in the survey covered 65% of the total population (the survey excluded those who left the education system after primary school, or possibly have not finished primary school, or went to short vocational training school).

A special test, which made the study of mathematical and natural science education possible, was devised for the school-leavers. The results indicated that Hungarian students perform well below the international average. In the domain of mathematics Hungary finished in the 14th place out of 21, and in the case of natural sciences in the 18th. Clearly, the results of this age group are not as good as those of younger generations. The data draws our attention to the assumption that, regarding student performance, problems particularly occur in upper grades. The ranking did not change even if only the best-performing 25% of students from all countries were taken into consideration. As for the divergence of the performance of different age groups from the international average, we can distinguish between four groups of countries. In the first group the performance of school-leavers is below, and that of younger age groups is above average. In the second group the performance of younger age groups is weaker and that of older students is stronger than the international average. In the third and fourth groups the performance is better than the international average in all age groups, but whereas school-leavers in the third group show a decreasing tendency, those in the fourth are improving (Fig. 8.2 on the next page). Hungary clearly belongs to the first group: although students in lower grades achieve results in mathematics, for example, that are getting better and which are well above international average as they progress in the system, performance in final grades is well below the international average. Results in natural sciences show a similar tendency. As long as the 90s trend of growing student intake rates continues, the situation is likely to worsen in the future. This phenomenon raises concern.

*Figure 8.2*

*The differences in the performance of different grades in mathematics and the international average, 1995 (standard scores)*



Source: Vári, 1998

## 8.5 OTHER INDICES OF SUCCESS

Success in school has other indices than student performance. Such are the rate of admission into higher education, the results of inter-school competitions at secondary level, or the rate of students taking foreign language examinations. This data has been regularly gathered and analysed extensively for all secondary schools, for years. Similar indicators related to primary education are not yet available. Educational statistics also contain indicators that are appropriate for the evaluation of success, such as data on end-of-year failures or drop-outs. In the past years there have been efforts to devise other indicators, such as the index of the frequency of deviant behavioural patterns observable in schools, or the degree of consumer satisfaction with the institutions.

The rate of students admitted into higher education is an index which is relatively easy to measure. This, however, only reflects one dimension of success. Admission into higher education and successful performances at entry tests may be studied according to several indices. The most frequently surveyed rate is the number of students admitted compared to the number of school-leavers (the F/L rate). Data gathered between 1991 and 1998 indicate that the typical F/L rate of secondary schools in different settlements, and in the regions nation-wide had slightly improved, as a result of the increasing number of seats and the decreasing number of school-leavers. The rate was 27.8% when calculated on the whole period between 1991 and 1998, and 29.3% between 1994 and 1998. At the same time, the F/L rate of separate settlement types and regions is nearly stagnating. For example, the highest rate is typical of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Bács-Kiskun and Hajdú-Bihar Counties, where it is constantly above 30%, whereas the lowest is in Budapest and Nógrád County, where it is below 25%. In regards of settlement types, the highest rate is in schools located in the eight largest cities (over one hundred thousand inhabitants), and the lowest is in schools located in the eight smallest settlements (below 5 000 inhabitants) (Table 8.3).



*Table 8.3*

*The average rate of the number of students admitted into higher education and the number of school-leavers (the F/L rate) and settlement types, 1991-1998 and 1994-1998*

Settlement size (number of inhabitants)	Number of settlements	1991-1998	1994-1998
Budapest	1	23.04	24.28
100 thousand or above	8	33.14	35.42
50-100 thousand	11	30.29	31.98
25-50 thousand	26	27.20	28.53
10-25 thousand	72	28.16	29.84
5-10 thousand	37	23.43	24.61
5 thousand or below	8	21.41	21.90
Total / Average	163	27.87	29.47

Source: Neuwirth, 1999

As for the admission rate, there seem to be large and growing discrepancies between different groups of secondary schools. While an average of 44.7% of students leaving general secondary schools were admitted into higher education between 1991 and 1998, the rate was 24.6% with mixed secondary schools (schools which integrate general and vocational education), and 16.3% with secondary vocational schools. The discrepancies between the F/L rate of differently structured general secondary schools is worth noting: the highest rate is in six-grade general secondary schools and the lowest in four-grade schools, but the index is almost as low in eight-grade general secondary schools as in the latter (Table 8.4).

*Table 8.4*

*The average rate of the number of students admitted into higher education and the number of school-leavers (the F/L rate) and the types of secondary schools, 1991-1998*

Secondary-school types	Number of schools	1991-1998	1994-1998
All secondary general schools	297	44.7	47.9
Six-grade	31	49.6	51.9
Four and eight-grade	36	47.3	51.4
Four and six-grade	79	45.1	49.6
Eight-grade	24	42.7	46.5
Four-grade	127	41.7	43.7
Mixed secondary schools	157	24.6	26.6
Secondary vocational schools	435	16.3	17.0
Total / Average	889	27.8	29.3

Source: Neuwirth, 1999

Another indicator of the achievement of secondary schools is the participation and possible successful performance in the OKTV and the OSZTV (the former is a competition between secondary schools, the latter is the same for vocational schools). From data gathered for twelve years, we may conclude that students ranked in the OKTV came from 444 secondary vocational schools (50% of Hungarian secondary schools), out of which 208 are general and 128 secondary vocational schools. 90% of the total scores were won by 154 schools (17% of all schools). Another index for success and efficiency is the rate of students who have passed foreign language examinations. This index has improved remarkably in the decade. Whereas out of all stu-

dents applying to universities and colleges in 1991 only every third had a state language exam, the index changed to every second by 1998. In order to arrive at a reliable analysis of the success of schools, there would be a great need for other indices: for example ones which measure the success of students in finding a job on the labour market, participating in professional training as adults, and integrating into society. The reason is that for a large proportion of institutions these indices would be the primary standards for measuring success. From this standpoint it is worth noting that Hungarian schools perform rather well, compared to international standards, when it comes to students' knowledge of subjects, however, their score is fairly low in indices that measure the school system's success in guiding students towards the world of labour.

# Chapter 9

## **Special Needs in Education**

In school education there are several student groups whose education must take place based on an individual curriculum, particular pedagogical principles and in many cases applying special education organising devices. Public education assumes a special responsibility related to the education of these groups, which responsibility is recorded clearly in a set of Hungarian laws. Two such groups of students in Hungary duly deserve distinguished attention: the handicapped and children belonging to ethnic minorities.

### **9.1 THE EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN**

The various categories of deficiencies related to special medical or educational responsibilities are itemised in Hungarian legal regulations. However, the borderlines dividing classes defined in accordance with different kinds of deficiencies frequently appear to be indistinct. In 1986 national and county level committees were established to assess physical and mental handicaps, sensory or speech impediments. National boards of experts deal with the examination of visual, hearing and speech abilities. Examining and supervising professional boards are operated in the capital as well as at the county level. These committees consist of teachers of the handicapped and leaders with such degrees, psychologists and medical specialists. The committees form their opinions regarding the examined handicapped child which serve as a base for recommending possibilities for his/her positioning in school or nursery school. Educational Counselling Services operate in each district of the capital and in every major town on an out-patient basis with a mission to explore, diagnose and surmount problems in the behaviour, education and learning process of children under family care between the age of 3 and 18.

Professional services for speech therapy function in divisions according to districts in the capital and to regions in the country where those with speech impediments may receive individual or group therapy. Boards of teachers of the handicapped might decide not only on sending children to special classes but also on transferring children from special classes into normal ones. On the other hand, according to the provisions of the 1998 Act on Equal Opportunities, parents of handicapped children do have the right to decide which of the offered institutions shall educate their children.

Early development is of key importance in the case of handicapped children. The teachers of the handicapped have two types of responsibility: one is counselling in reference to the problems of the parents and the direct environment of the child, the other concerns the control of a deficiency-specific improvement. As a travelling educator, the teacher of the handicapped in charge of the controlled counselling and specific development personally visits the family home or the parents attend the counselling service with their child.

### *The Educational System for the Handicapped*

The nursery schools and primary schools for the handicapped – complete with accommodation in a students' dormitory or day-care services – are educational institutions dealing with those 'teachable' children with special needs aged 3–16 who entered the institutional system. Additionally, certain normal nursery and primary schools also have groups, classes or divisions for the education of the handicapped (for children with speech impediments or with slight mental deficiencies, in particular). Those handicapped of kindergarten or school age whose personality development might be optionally arranged, with special educational help, within nursery or primary schools may pursue their studies fully or in a partially integrated manner with other children. This form of teaching, however, is currently less typical. The general practice in primary school education is special schools or school classes for the children and youth with deficiencies. In the scholastic year of 1998/99 approximately 200 institutions and 481 primary school divisions were engaged in the education of handicapped school-age children, these were attended by 44 339 pupils. 0.5% of nursery school children, 3.35% of pupils in primary schools and 0.87% of those in secondary schools attend institutions for the handicapped. Approximately 12 000 children receive speech therapy. In accordance with the Public Education Act parents are entitled to choose the educational institution on the basis of an expert opinion given by the Expertise and Rehabilitation Committee for the examination of learning abilities and by the National Expertise and Rehabilitation Committee. However, the parents' freedom of choice is somewhat restricted by the act as well, since it declares that handicapped students may only enrol in educational institutions that have the necessary staff and funds for this special form of education.

Normal and special forms of school education converge in several respects. While designing their programmes, the institutions participating in the education of the handicapped are obliged to take into consideration the principles issued with reference to the education of children with deficiencies. In public education (apart from special schools educating the mentally handicapped) education is performed along a largely common curriculum regulated by the National Core Curriculum. This enables handicapped children to complete primary school studies and to further continue their studies in secondary or higher education. Each school or other educational institution for the handicapped has the right to decide which methods they regard most sufficient to use in the process of education and care. Education in school classes with a small number of students appears typical, however, individual (speech therapeutic) or individual and small group corrective activities are also widely practised. Handicapped students usually receive a final school-leaving certificate identical with that of able students. There are a total of 2 500–3 000 children with visual, hearing or speech impediments, motor and complex deficiencies, and nine or ten times as many students attending schools for the mentally handicapped. This number includes 90% of those who attend schools for children with slight mental deficiencies or separate special classes in primary schools. This rate is regarded as an exceptionally high proportion even in an international comparison.

The high proportion of pupils with a slight mental deficiency or, in other terms, children with slight learning difficulties in Hungary might be explained with differences in definition. One reason is that a large number of Gypsy children are directed to special schools, another is that, in lack of sufficient conditions, institutions with normal curricula are unable to admit these pupils. For most handicapped children the possibility of continuing their studies in secondary or even in higher education is rather limited.

### *Teacher Training in the Education of the Handicapped*

Teachers for the handicapped are trained in a four-year programme of Bárczi Gusztáv Teacher Training College for Teachers of the Handicapped, in Budapest. From January 2000 the college functions as the Faculty of Education for the Handicapped within the ELTE (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest). The training is organised in majors according to the main deficiency groups. Another prestigious institution that trains experts (so-called conductors) to deal with the physically handicapped is the Hungarian Pető Institute. It has been observed in many cases that regular teachers and teachers of the handicapped should obtain each others' degrees as a second diploma in the related fields through post-graduate training. Institutions for the education of the handicapped, especially in rural areas, struggle with a significant shortage of experts.

### *Possibilities for Integration*

A distinctive feature of the education of the handicapped is the fact that the Hungarian school system tends to educate pupils with deficiencies in strongly specialised and isolated institutions. While in several other countries some pupils with slight mental deficiencies are taught in normal classes, this is virtually non-existent in Hungary. In primary education separate institutions function for the blind and the visually challenged, for pupils with hearing impediments, physical and mental deficiencies. These isolated schools – while performing their educational duties at sufficient, or rather, excellent standards – often hinder the social integration of their students. Work-related and other social consequences of educational isolation are obvious for the handicapped. Still, there is no general agreement on the integration of children with a slight deficiency in Hungary. A major difficulty hindering such a consensus is the fact that normal educational institutions, from many aspects, are not yet capable of achieving the professional standards of institutions specialised for the education of the handicapped.

One of the most important new objective of the education of the handicapped is to help the handicapped individual in adapting to a normal society at school, in workplaces and in other fields of life. This aim will make it necessary in the future to establish a harmonised development in the integrated work of teachers and teachers of the handicapped. The 1998 Act of Equal Opportunities contains specific regulations in this respect – though allowing for a due time of notice – declaring that if it is beneficial from the point of view of the development of the handicapped child's skills he/she should be educated in a common class or group together with other children. One of the most problematic elements in the school training of children with slight mental deficiencies is the selection and counter-selection functioning at school. In teaching the mentally handicapped, social problems are often mistaken for educational problems. According to schooling data, 90% of the handicapped attend schools for the mentally handicapped, whereas a mere 8% of all the handicapped are registered as individuals with a mental deflection. Official numeric statistics regarding the number and proportion of the handicapped also make it clear that individuals with slight mental deficiencies, as they step into adulthood, are absorbed in the society of the able to such an extent that a significant proportion of them can no longer be identified as handicapped. Besides legal regulations, there is still a lot to be done in order to provide the appropriate conditions of integrated education. Such means are the establishment of pedagogic methods for integrated education, the introduction of training integrative teachers, the development of new educational training types in order to raise awareness and increase the social sensitivity of the teachers as well as new financial incentives.

Teachers specialised in the given type of deficiency or perhaps travelling teachers might assist teachers engaged in the integrated education of handicapped children. In the early 1990s the admission of handicapped children into normal schools started to gain ground spontaneously, mainly due to demographic and financial reasons. This spontaneous integration is called 'austere integration' since these schools usually lack the technical, pedagogic and concept-related conditions for the joint education of able and handicapped children. This spontaneous integration, which is estimated to affect several thousand children in primary school with handicaps or learning difficulties, however, does not change the present state which could be described as segregated.

## 9.2 THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BELONGING TO ETHNIC MINORITIES

Since the change of regime the efforts of the educational policy have been focused on changing the system of public education. Little attention was paid, and no sufficient financial resources rendered, to elaborate and implement 'system-compatible' educational policies serving to handle the educational problems of groups in special situations. Nevertheless, the new educational system built on the principles of decentralisation, liberalisation and shared responsibilities has created beneficial conditions for the education of minorities as well, since it allows individual schools to meet the peculiar linguistic and cultural needs of different local minorities. Decentralisation, however, might include hidden threats as well – regarding the education of Gypsy minorities, in particular.

Nowadays the Croatian, German, Romanian, Serb, Slovak and Slovenian minorities have a stable network of schools. Ethnic Bulgarians, Greeks, Russians and Poles have one primary school each. The education of pupils belonging to other ethnic minorities are organised in 'Sunday Schools'. The number of their institutions and students have continuously increased in the past years as well as their proportion within the educational system: in the scholastic year of 1990/91 44 545 students studied in their mother tongues or in two languages in primary schools or learned the minority language as a subject, whereas, by 1999/2000 their number amounted to 55 013 (Table 9.1). The number of institutions with minority education has also been constantly on the rise. In 1990/91 322 such institutions were registered which was 9% of the total number of primary schools, whereas, in 1996/97 the 384 primary schools aggregated 10% of the total. By 1999 the number of primary schools where education took place in minority languages as well amounted to 395, thus, their proportion grew to 11% (Table 9.1). While until 1996 the number of secondary schools teaching an ethnic minority programme had been increasing to 26, this number diminished to 23 in 1999/2000 which may be explained by the disappearance of vocational schools teaching foreign languages in the country. Statistics on institutions and students show that the existing capacities are not utilised. The decrease in the number of those students who, coming from minority primary schools, continue their studies in minority secondary schools is probably due to the unfavourable location of these secondary schools, the narrow range in training profiles and the low social prestige of minority education. Most of these schools function in an integrated system, that is, students of ethnic minorities attend only certain classes of the institutions.

Table 9.1

*Data on ethnic minority education, 1990/91, 1995/96-1999/2000*

	Teaching in minority language			Out of the total number of students						
	Institution	Teachers	Students	Croatian	German	Romanian	Serb	Slovak	Slovenian	Others
<i>Nursery School</i>										
1990/91	287	680	14 009	1 684	9 187	453		2 584	101	
1995/96	364	935	20 470	1 603	14 589	647	184	3 258	79	110
1996/97	365	959	20 486	1 549	14 658	651	212	3 211	87	118
1997/98	386	993	20 440	1 585	14 744	617	164	2 989	88	253
1998/99	390	1 010	19 703	1 486	14 177	541	174	3 115	95	115
1999/2000		1 039	19 792	1 388	14 141	547	181	3 050	112	373
Out of this teaching in minority languages		531	2 300	253	1 488	130	87	103	0	239
<i>Primary school</i>										
1990/91	322	1 048	44 545	3 870	33 550	961	nd	5879	235	50
1995/96	398	1 255	49 821	2 657	41 029	1 041	281	4 317	116	380
1996/97	384	1 338	51 627	2 517	42 940	1 069	278	4 444	131	248
1997/98	390	1 357	53 021	2 476	44 338	1 127	227	4 409	120	324
1998/99	393	1 433	53 998	2 579	45 240	1 156	228	4 412	122	261
1999/2000	395	1 461	55 013	2 526	46 254	1 198	275	4 424	116	137
Out of this teaching in minority languages	18	106	1760	319	758	427	164	92	0	0
<i>Secondary school</i>										
1990/91	10	nd	1 301	251	746	128		176		
1995/96	23	165	1 987	214	1 376	114	75	197	11	
1996/97	26	164	2 136	203	1 498	118	72	205	10	30
1997/98	22	196	2 224	214	1 559	104	92	195	7	53
1998/99	21	211	2 335	217	1 672	110	103	132	8	93
1999/2000	23	226	2 825	219	1 978	257	126	118	9	118
Out of this teaching in minority languages	11	226	1 839	219	1 129	129	126	118	0	118

Source: Statistics by the Ministry of Education; 1999/2000: calculations by Erika Garami and Tibor Könyvesi

In the past ten years the differentiation in the regional distribution of schools and school types has been improving. The network of schools is generally adjusted to the geographical locations of the ethnic minorities. The region of the River Mura is the centre of Slovenian education with a general secondary school in Szentgotthárd. Romanian language is taught along the southern frontiers of the country, with a general secondary school operating in Gyula. Schools for ethnic Croats are typically found in western parts of Hungary while schools of the Slovak minority are characteristic of the North and the Southeast. The schools of other minorities are located sporadically around the country. Larger units are only formed by minorities significant in numbers and secondary schools only partially follow the regional patterns of primary schools. In most cases the secondary school is not located within a realistically achievable commuting range, hence, the only alternative to leaving the network of minority education for a child is finding accommodation in a student dormitory.



Another peculiar feature of minority education is the fact that children of non-minority family backgrounds also tend to appear in minority education which makes the measurement of the actual demand for minority education nearly impossible. One such example with effects of this kind is the increasing interest in German language. In 1999 out of the total number of students receiving an education including minority languages, 84% continue their studies in German minority programmes as opposed to the 75% rate of the similar statistics 10 years ago. Even within the expanding secondary school education the increase in German language proves prominent (82.3%), whereas the number of students engaged in all other secondary school minority programmes shows a declining trend (Table 9.1).

Parallel with the increase in the number of students and new schools entering the minority network a similar increase may be detected in the number of minority teachers, hence, the number of students per school and per teacher have been declining. While in 1987 the number of students per one minority language teacher totalled 52, the same was only 37 in 1998 and the average number of students for one language teacher is 49 in secondary schools. This minority data, which is more favourable than their national equivalents, however, shows significant variation in reference to different languages. Hungarian higher education offers no training programme qualifying teachers to teach subjects in a foreign language at all, neither does it provide for relevant postgraduate courses. The problems of teacher training are partially rooted in the decade-long underdeveloped state of the secondary school network which should be regarded as a basis for training intellectuals.

The working conditions of minority education are expected to be improved by the additional subsidies guaranteed in the Public Education Act and calculated beyond normative support by the state. In the past ten years these subsidies – of varying amounts – were transferred to schools via local governments. Due to the separate definitions of normative support and additional subsidies, and to the reliance on the support by local governments, these sums often failed to achieve the objective of improving conditions in minority education. The national system of pedagogic service providers in minority education has been repeatedly changed in the 1990s. Currently, aside from minority service centres established within the National Institute of Public Education, the Kiss Árpád National Service Office of Public Education and a network of county level pedagogic institutions are also engaged in pedagogic improvements and offer services. In the lack of financial resources for development, however, this system has only had limited possibilities in influencing the standards and content of minority education.

### *The Education of Gypsy Students*

There is no separate primary institutional system provided for the education of Gypsy students. Although they generally attend schools maintained by local governments on the secondary level of education as well, there are only a few secondary schools with specific Romany pedagogic programmes, including for instance the 6-year Ghandi General Secondary School and College in Pécs, the Kalyi Jag Roma Minority Technical School in Budapest or the Romany Chance Alternative Foundational Technical School.

It is quite difficult to paint a precise picture of the success of the education of Gypsy children, in lack of sufficient information, as since the Act on the Protection of Personal Data was passed in 1993 there has been no information available on their progress in the system, neither can data on their school achievement be presented due to a lack of sufficiently representative

surveys. Having examined data from the early 1990s, nevertheless, the gap in schooling seems to have further expanded in the 1980s between the Gypsy minority and the majority by the early 1990s. No improvement seems to be apparent concerning the opportunities of Gypsy students for advancement to secondary level and, though the proportion of their drop-outs has decreased in primary schools, this rate has increased in the vocational training and in the secondary education offering a secondary school-leaving examination. All levels of Hungarian public education lack established conditions for the insurance of the principle of equal opportunities for Gypsy students. Due to lack of relevant data, the effects of the changes in Hungarian public education in the 1990s (such as the expansion of the education aiming at a secondary school-leaving examination for example) cannot be calculated on the achievements of Gypsy students.

The most problematic question in public education related to the education of Gypsy students is the apparent negative discrimination against them. One way of segregation of the Gypsy within the educational system – which is not uncommon in other Central-European countries either – appears to be directing them into so-called special schools and classes organised for children with a slight mental handicap. Nearly half of the children attending such institutions are of a Gypsy origin, which is an approximately tenfold rate compared to their participation in the whole of public education. Even the repeated aggravation in the regulations of directing children into special institutions has failed to prevent these schools from functioning as 'mass storage sites' for Gypsy students. The vast number of Gypsy students in these institutions, which offer no opportunity for further study or employment, denotes their discrimination and the pedagogic failure of normal public education institutions rather than their mental unfitness.

Several schools apply a more concealed, though pedagogically not less harmful, method of segregation. Lower quality education may be the result of other factors than a separate school. In milder cases segregation might take the form of in-class separation, in more extreme cases, however, it might result in the establishment of segregated classes. In 1995, out of the 840 primary schools providing data Gypsy classes were maintained in 132 schools. The exact number of Gypsy classes is unknown yet it is estimated to amount over 150. Segregated classes are typical of the main towns of the counties. Students attending Gypsy classes do not receive a higher standard of education than those in integrated education. Children taught in such classes tend to show little or no progress and their reintegration usually becomes impossible after a couple of years. Segregation maintains and increases the distance between minority children and their peers, thus, it has an immeasurably damaging effect on children of majority background as well. Sociological studies clearly indicate a strong pressure of segregation in Hungarian public education.

Teaching Romany languages is not compulsory in compensation classes for Gypsies. If, however, the school is willing to assume this task, it will take place according to the provisions on language programmes. The four classes, usually operating in a weekly service in the language teaching of ethnic minorities – in lack of teaching of Romany languages – might be devoted to the development of subjects, the revival of ethnic traditions, socialisation and communication, to cultural activities and/or individual activities for the talented.

# Chapter 10

## **Inequality and Equity in Public Education**

Social, regional and local inequalities have considerably grown in Hungary during the 1990s. The number of unstable families has increased, the prospects of integration for the handicapped have become more difficult, and the position of Gypsies has worsened dramatically. In the middle of the decade, these challenges and the problems these processes raised became one of the central issues of education policy. Today's pedagogy and education policy focus on compensating for the social, financial, linguistic and cultural disadvantages of students. In the 1970s and 1980s education policy-makers attempted to solve these problems by way of the so-called alternative approaches in pedagogy, and later by focusing on, and redefining, the quality of education. The dividing lines between equal opportunities (access to services regardless of social background), positive discrimination (instruments used to compensate disadvantaged groups), and quality slowly grew indistinct. The problem of inequality within the educational system basically became a question of quality.

The efficiency of education, and the inequalities observable in terms of efficiency, can be grasped with the help of two kinds of data: one is advancement in the school system, and another is measurable school performances. One of the most important indices of the efficiency of education is the number of students who fail to complete their studies, i.e. the rate of dropouts. In Hungary this category comprises students who fail to complete primary school, students who complete primary education but leave school before the compulsory age-limit for school attendance, handicapped students who complete special schools, students who drop out from secondary education, and students who complete vocational training programmes that do not increase their chances of employment.

With regard to advancement in the school system, the rate of dropouts is relatively high. 25% of youngsters leaving education fall into this category. This is indicated by the high rate of young people, between the ages of 16 and 19, who do not attend school and are unemployed (Table 10.1). Research done over the past decades suggests that approaches which aim to explore educational inequalities by focusing solely on indicators of advancement in the system, fail to reveal important dimensions that are increasingly significant in the light of trends in the labour market. In addition, we come closer to an understanding of the problem of selection within education if we use the results of school performance surveys to supplement the picture presented by school statistics. As a consequence of all this, in addition to the above-mentioned student groups labelled as 'dropouts', we can include other groups on the list. The term 'dropout' may be extended to students who leave school without acquiring learning skills, personal conduct and the skills necessary for employment, to students who fail to learn the so-called culturally important instrumental skills (such as reading comprehension or basic computer skills), and to students who, upon leaving the education system, complete programmes that have a low additional pedagogical value.

Table 10.1

*Status of young people from 15-24 in education and in the labour market, 1992 and 1997 (%)*

Age	Attends school		Employed		Unemployed		Inactive		Total (one thousand people)	
	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
15	96.9	97.5	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.1	2.2	2.4	178.5	138.1
16	90.6	95.1	2.7	0.1	2.0	0.4	4.7	4.4	189.9	143.8
17	72.5	92.4	6.1	0.6	4.4	1.7	7.0	5.3	181.7	154.6
18	61.2	78.4	23.5	8.6	8.1	4.0	7.2	9.0	151.2	162.0
19	56.4	56.5	39.4	20.7	10.9	7.2	13.3	15.6	146.9	170.9
15-19	75.8	83.1	16.3	6.3	4.9	2.9	6.6	7.7	848.2	769.4
20	25.6	37.6	46.3	33.0	12.7	8.5	15.4	20.9	142.2	178.1
21	18.0	29.4	57.1	41.6	9.1	8.0	15.8	21.3	143.6	189.4
22	11.8	19.1	60.9	50.6	11.6	9.9	15.7	20.4	144.1	181.2
23	11.3	22.2	62.2	55.8	10.4	6.6	16.1	25.4	144.5	150.8
24	2.1	2.9	66.2	63.8	9.3	6.6	22.4	26.7	138.4	146.4
20-24	15.4	22.0	57.1	47.9	10.7	8.3	16.8	21.9	712.8	845.9
15-24	34.1	36.7	43.3	38.7	8.0	5.8	14.6	18.8	1 561.0	1 615.3

Source: Transition..., 1999

## 10.1 TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

The influence of different inequalities and differences on the school career of children is exerted through a complex system of effects. For example, inequalities between settlements not only have an indirect effect on school career by means of the conditions provided by the schools, but they also have a direct effect on the accessibility of cultural materials or on the characteristics of early socialisation within the family.

The issue of inequality within the educational system can be studied in three dimensions: (1) access to educational services; (2) teaching and learning process within the educational system; and (3) students' achievements.

As regards access to educational services, the factors worthy of primary attention are the geographical location of the different educational institutions, the system of allotment of financial resources, and the stock of professional teachers. As for the inequality that can be traced in the teaching-learning process, the quality of schools, the content of education and the quality of teaching and educational activities should be mapped. When we are drawing up the 'map of problem areas' concerning educational inequalities, we have to take into account all the above listed factors. On the one hand, we must pay attention to the social environment of education, i.e. the categories for describing the 'background' of students (social inequality and differences). On the other hand, we must also include the inequalities occurring within the education system, i.e. access to educational services, the quality of those, and inequalities in connection with the efficiency of education.

### *Social Inequality*

All research done in this field shows that qualification, occupation, income and the risk of unemployment are closely related to each other. In Hungary, like almost everywhere in the world, 'the strongest trend is to pass on the level of qualification and occupational position'. The interrelation between social inequality and educational performance is an issue typically raised in Hungary in connection with socially disadvantaged students. There cannot be any doubt that there is a strong statistical connection between parental background and the different risk factors that play a key role in school failure. Nevertheless, among the possible reasons behind school failure, there are many, which cannot be mechanically linked to the qualification, the occupation or the income of parents. Such are, for example, drug-taking, and the divorce or the impaired health condition of parents. Another problem is that the different types of risk factors (for example, behavioural disorders and criminalisation) and the indicators of school failure (for instance the dropout-rate) often merge into one another. There are more direct correlations between the social position of parents and the success of children in education. For children growing up in families of low social status the environment outside the school often lacks the stimuli necessary to meet the knowledge and skill requirements of the school. In other words, their environment often lacks the conditions for distraction-free learning. Problematic family circumstances make it difficult for children to integrate into their age group, which often results in aggression, which in turn draws retributions from the school. Different relative disadvantages lessen students' degree of motivation, shorten their span of attention, and generally lead to failure. There is a serious problem in connection with the costs of education, both direct (text-books, school equipment, travel) and indirect (clothing, food), as these are becoming a reason for concern for a growing number of families. The increasing role of private tuition in the success of children in the school is another problem that can be linked to the financial capacity of families.

As for the success of students in their school career, skills development at an early age plays a highly significant role. Although the number of children attending nursery school in Hungary is high by international standards, it is notable that this number is the lowest in social groups that would need nursery education the most (for example, Gypsy children and children of unemployed parents). There are certain signs that 'gap-bridging' programmes in schools have a positive influence on the performance of children, however, their effect has failed to live up to expectations. Generally speaking, in Hungarian schools the culture of supporting individual learning methods has not evolved, the problem of identifying students in need of 'compensation classes' or supplementary pedagogical attention is not solved, schools employ a very small number of non-teaching professionals (for example psychologists, skills development teachers or social helpers), and the pedagogical development and service providers indispensable for this kind of work are still under-developed. At the same time, the financial aids specially granted for catering, travel and textbook expenses often prove to be insufficient.

In the past decade a significant number of primary educational institutions that focus their objectives on developing the children's personality and the acquisition of skills necessary in their future school career have been established. These initiatives, however, hardly had an effect on the management of the institutions with many of the most endangered students, partly because they undertook the education of highly gifted or middle-class students, and also because the experiences they gained have rarely become widely known. One of the reasons behind this is that Hungarian public education has no established system for evaluating and analysing differ-

ent unique or experimental models. Another is that both the information web and the system of school-developing services that could make these models exert a widespread influence on a large number of institutions are underdeveloped. The close relationship between the family background, suggested by the qualification of parents, and the educational inequalities between students can be observed by other means than outlining different school careers. The differences are clearly documented in the dissimilar school performances as early as the 8th grade. Taking the highest and lowest qualified parents, the difference measured in the knowledge of students exceeds 20 percent everywhere. Considering that in many developed countries the difference in performance between the children of the highest and lowest qualified parents is less than 10 percent, the social inequality measured in school performance can be declared fairly large in Hungary.

### *Regional and Institutional Inequality*

There is practically no issue in education that does not involve inequality in connection with regional aspects. The differences observable along the lines of some regional dimensions (regions, settlement type, size of settlement) can be considered natural to a certain degree and in a certain sense. However, these differences count as inequality only if the place of living becomes the source of educational disadvantages, as regards the funding of education, the access to different levels of educational services, the quality of education or school performances, inequalities that are hard to work off.

Within the educational expenditure of local governments, the rate of normative subsidies by the state was constantly declining until 1995, but has slightly increased since 1996. The analysis of educational expenditures of local governments per student indicates that the inequalities in the expenditure of local governments have not decreased in the nineties, in fact, except for 1996, they have been growing. The shortfall of settlements whose educational spending is below average remained unchanged in terms of material expenditure until 1995, however, in 1997 their relative situation worsened. This goes to show that the system of state subsidies did not succeed in closing the gap between local government expenditure on education. One of the reasons behind the persistent inequalities in expenditure is that a significant number of local governments can adapt to decreasing student numbers to a limited extent only, since they cannot restrict the number of classes and employees accordingly. Therefore, the drop in demand can raise local average expenditure, which makes the differences in the per-student expenditure persist or even rise.

As for access to educational services, regional differences manifest themselves most in the continuation of studies at secondary level. For example, the rate of students going on to secondary grammar schools is the lowest, except for Baranya County, in North-Hungary and in Central-Transdanubian areas, but relatively high in the Great Plain and in Central-Hungary. The larger differences are present in the gaps between settlement types, and in the size of the settlements within the types. The number of public education institutions the settlement is provided with, for example, strongly depends on its size. There are 716 settlements in Hungary (nearly one-fourth of all settlements) where there are no public education institutions. The majority of these are small settlements with less than 500 inhabitants.

In the settlements that may be considered most typical, with 1 000 to 5 000 inhabitants, there are usually two types of institutions: nursery and primary school. Ninety percent of cities



offer a full range of public educational institutions and 96 percent of secondary schools are in cities. The rate of secondary students living in other settlements than the one where their school is located is the highest in the case of secondary schools in township communities. This rate is radically decreasing with the growth of cities, but still every fifth secondary student in Budapest commutes from other settlements.

The inequalities measurable in the regional dimension can be apprehended fairly well with the help of the specific indices of education. Similarly to inequality in connection with access to education, differences in settlement type and settlement size are significant. For instance, considerable differences can be observed in the use of available nursery school capacities: in villages below 500 inhabitants, the rate of nursery school children compared to available capacities is below 80 percent, whereas in settlements above 5 000 inhabitants nursery schools are definitely crowded, the same rate being 113.2 %. In primary education the largest differences in the number of students per teacher and per school are also between small villages below 1 000 and large settlements above 5 000 inhabitants.

The inequality between settlement types can also be traced by looking at the different skills students develop, and at their level of knowledge. Between students learning in Budapest and in villages the largest difference is in reading comprehension, but they are fairly significant in civic education and cognitive abilities, as well. The differences are not that large in mathematics and informatics, and they are small in the case of natural sciences. The differences in the abilities of students in schools of different settlement types become more marked in the field of reading comprehension, which suggests that the language gap between villages and towns is widening.

### *Differences Between the Genders*

Educational differences between boys and girls may basically occur in three areas: (1) their advancement in the school system, and the school careers they choose or can choose, (2) their school performance, and (3) the socializing effect of education.

Between the data on the nursery and primary schooling of the two genders there are no significant differences in Hungary. Although the number of boys leaving education without primary qualification (completing eight grades in primary school) is one and a half times as large as that of girls, the rate of boys and girls leaving education after primary school is nearly the same (Table 10.2). Nevertheless, after the completion of primary school, the differences in the career of students of the two genders become stronger. The difference is striking between the rate of boys and girls dropping out without taking the secondary school-leaving exam: 52 percent of the boys and 41 percent of the girls belonged to this group in 1998. In technical schools there is an invariably distinct difference between training courses preparing students for 'male' and 'female' trades. The differences observable in the secondary qualification structure are also fairly marked: roughly twice as many girls leave education with secondary general school qualifications, whereas the number of boys taking the secondary school-leaving examination in vocational schools is considerably higher. The rate of girls completing post-secondary training programmes is slightly higher than that of boys leaving at this level.



*Table 10.2**The number of boys and girls leaving education according to educational levels, 1998 (thousand people)*

Educational level	Boys	Girls	Total
Without primary school qualification	3.1	2.0	5.1
Left education after primary school	11.9	11.1	23.0
Obtained special short vocational training school qualification	0.4	0.3	0.7
Obtained vocational training school qualification	1.2	2.1	3.3
Qualified for medical training	0.0	0.2	0.2
Qualified for typing and stenography	0.0	0.5	0.5
Obtained vocational training school qualification	25.3	14.8	40.1
Obtained secondary school qualification	25.4	29.5	54.9
Secondary vocational school qualification	6.5	4.1	10.6
General secondary school qualification	6.4	12.3	18.7
Qualified in post-secondary education	12.5	13.1	25.6
Obtained higher education qualification	12.9	14.7	27.6
Total	80.2	75.2	155.4
Obtained secondary qualification (%)	58.8	49.8	108.6
Without secondary qualification (%)	21.4	25.4	46.8

Source: KSH, Hungarian Statistical Yearbook, 1998

According to data from the Monitor surveys, the differences in the level of knowledge between boys and girls are not significant: the cognitive abilities of eighth-former girls exceeded that of boys, and there was only one domain of knowledge where the performance of the latter was better, namely reading comprehension. In recent years, however, differences in the favour of boys have increased, for example, in the domain of mathematical thinking or ICT knowledge and skills. All this suggests that the pedagogical practices of primary schools ensure better conditions for the development of boys. The interrelation of socialisation in the school and socialisation at home is demonstrated by the fact that the higher the qualification of parents, the smaller the difference between the two genders, except for computer science and natural sciences. The third possible dimension to educational inequality between boys and girls, which has not been explored in Hungary as yet, is the socialising effect of education: the typical gender roles the school transmits, and how these affect the future social position and life prospects of boys and girls.

## 10.2 POSSIBLE EDUCATION POLICIES AND THEIR INSTRUMENTS

Opinion is divided as to how the problems arising in connection with educational inequality should be interpreted. The different international organisations (OECD, EU, World Bank) put the issues concerning the quality of education in the centre, whereas in Hungary considerations concerning the structure of schools are more dominant. One of the crucial reasons behind the structure-oriented thinking is the lack of information on the pedagogical efficiency of education, and the failure to take a survey of the inequalities within the educational system. There is little doubt that the instruments for improving the quality of education are expensive (such as the

monitoring of individual student performances). On the whole, it can be said that (1) the issue of social and regional inequality has received marked attention throughout the decade, (2) the issue of the education of minorities in general, and that of Gypsies in particular, has been given more attention since the middle of the 90s, but it is not fully integrated into the whole of education policy, (3) the education of special needs students is invariably one of the peripheral issues of education policy, and (4) the issue of the equality of the genders has not appeared on the agenda of policy makers.

Programmes that pronouncedly aim at reducing inequalities have been rarely launched. One of these was the Programme for the Educational Development of Gypsies, introduced in 1995, and another the PHARE-programme of 2000, which intends to 'support the social integration of the multiply-disadvantaged, primarily Gypsy children'. The programme, with a total budget of 9.6 million euros, contains three major elements: (1) decreasing the dropout rate in primary school, (2) the support of special secondary training, and (3) the improvement of the social situation of the Gypsy minority, and their social integration.

# Appendix

## *Main indicators of the Hungarian educational system in international comparison, 1998*

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION	DESCRIPTION OF INDICATORS		HUNGARY	OECD AVERAGE
	Public expenditure on educational institutions in percentage of GDP		4.83	5.1
	The proportion of private resources within expenditure on educational institutions (source identified)		12	10
	Annual expenditure per student (USD)	Primary education	2 035	3 851
		Secondary education	2 093	5 274
		Higher education	5 430	8 601
	Wages of primary school teachers adjusted for buying power (in USD)	Initial wages of primary school teachers	5 978	21 459
		Legally guaranteed annual wages of teachers with 15 years of experience	11 066	29 899
	Student / teacher rate	Primary education	11.0	17.1
		Secondary education	10.8	15.2
		Higher education	11.8	14.6
ENROLMENT DATA	Expected length of schooling (in years) under the present circumstances (excluding children below 5)		15.6	16.4
	The rate of those with upper secondary education (ISCED 3) within the age group of school-leavers		90	79
	The net rate of those enrolling in higher education (ISCED 5/A) <sup>i</sup>		45	40
	Graduates per initially enrolling students (ISCED 5/A)		77	nd
	Change in the percentage of students enrolling in higher education <sup>ii</sup> (1990 = 100)		205	149
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND THE ORGANISATION OF SCHOOL EDUCATION (ISCED 2)	Annual number of classes per primary school teachers in the state-financed sector		555	700
	Annual number of classes of students aged 13		902	937
	Mean value of student per computer rate in upper primary education (age 10-14) <sup>iii</sup>		30	17.1
EDUCATIONAL EFFICIENCY (INDIVIDUALS AND THE LABOUR MARKET)	Qualifications of the adult population and the rate of currently graduating students	Rate of those with upper secondary or higher qualifications in the 25-64 age (ISCED 3<)	63	61
		Rate of those currently graduating from upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	90	79
		Rate of those holding a university higher qualifications in the 25-64 age (ISCED 5/A<)	13	14
		Rate of those working towards their first university degree (ISCED 5/A)	25	24
	The differential index of the income of those with a university degree and those with upper secondary education only (25-64 age group)	Male	213	nd
		Female	154	nd
	Unemployment rates according to highest qualifications (percentage of age group)	Primary education only or lower in the 15-19 age group	39.1	22.1
		Primary education only or lower in the 20-24 age group	17.8	18.9
		Primary education only or lower in the 25-29 age group	18	15.2
		Secondary education in the 20-24 age group	10.4	13.6
		Secondary education in the 25-29 age group	7.2	9

i Higher education A – type (ISCED 5/A) including university and college courses.

ii Data for 1997

iii Data for the scholastic year 1998/99

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## List of Abbreviations

English	Abbreviation	Hungarian
Body of Pedagogical In-service Training and Accreditation	PAT	Pedagógus-továbbképzési Akkreditációs Testület
Budapest Capital Career Counselling Institution	FIPT	Fővárosi Ifjúsági és Pályaválasztási Tanácsadó
Budapest Capital Pedagogical Institute	FPI	Fővárosi Pedagógiai Intézet
Centre of Foreign Language Education	ITK	Idegennyelvi Továbbképző Központ
Council for Higher Education and Science	FTT	Felsőoktatási és Tudományos Tanács
Council for the Reconciliation of Interests in Public Education	KÖÉT	Közoktatási Érdekegyeztető Tanács
Council for the Reconciliation of Interests of Public Institutions	KIÉT	Költségvetési Intézmények Érdekegyeztető Tanácsa
Council of Public Education	KT	Közoktatáspolitikai Tanács
County Pedagogical Institute	MPI	Megyei Pedagógiai Intézet
Democratic Trade Union for Teachers	PDSZ	Pedagógusok Demokratikus Szakszervezete
Eötvös Loránd University	ELTE	Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem
Hungarian Academy of Science	MTA	Magyar Tudományos Akadémia
Hungarian Accreditation Committee	MAB	Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság
Hungarian Central Statistical Office	KSH	Központi Statisztikai Hivatal
Hungarian Institute for Educational Research	OI	Oktatáskutató Intézet
Kiss Árpád National Service Office of Public Education	KÁ OKSZI	Kiss Árpád Országos Közoktatási Szolgáltató Iroda
Methodology and Information Centre for In-service Teacher Training	PTMIK	Pedagógus-továbbképzési Módszertani és Információs Központ
Ministry of Education	OM	Oktatási Minisztérium
Ministry of Social and Family Affairs	SzCsM	Szociális és Családügyi Minisztérium
National Committee for Minorities	OKB	Országos Kisebbségi Bizottság
National Committee of Secondary School-Leaving Examination	OÉV	Országos Érettségi Vizsgabizottság
National Competitions for Secondary Education	OKTV	Országos Középiskolai Tanulmányi Versenyek
National Competitions for Secondary Vocational Education	OSZTV	Országos Szakmai Tanulmányi Versenyek
National Core Curriculum, NCC	NAT	Nemzeti alaptanterv
National Council for Students' Right	ODT	Országos Diákjogi Tanács

English	Abbreviation	Hungarian
National Council for Training	OKT	Országos Képzési Tanács
National Council for Vocational Training	OSZT	Országos Szakképzési Tanács
National Expert List	OSZN	Országos Szakértői Névjegyzék
National Institute of Public Education	OKI	Országos Köznevelési Intézet
National Institute of Vocational Education	NSZI	Nemzeti Szakképzési Intézet
National Pedagogical In-service Training and Accreditation Committee	PAB	Pedagógus-továbbképzési Akkreditációs Bizottság
National Public Education Council	OKNT	Országos Köznevelési Tanács
National Public Education Evaluation and Examination Centre	OKÉV	Országos Köznevelési Értékelési és Vizsgaközpont
National Textbook Association	TOSZ	Tankönyvesek Országos Szövetsége
National Training Register	OKJ	Országos Képzési Jegyzék
Office of the Commissioner for Educational Rights	OJBH	Oktatási Jogok Biztosa Hivatala
Public Foundation for the Modernisation of School Education	KOMA	Köznevelési Modernizációs Alapítvány
Trade Union for Teachers	PSZ	Pedagógusok Szakszervezete

# List of Terms

English	Hungarian
4, 6, 8 GRADE / YEARS GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOL	4, 6, 8 OSZTÁLYOS GIMNÁZIUM
ACCREDITED HIGHER LEVEL VOCATIONAL TRAINING	AKKREDITÁLT FELSŐFOKÚ SZAKKÉPZÉS
APPRENTICE EXAM	SZAKMUNKÁSVIZSGA
BASIC EXAMINATION	ALAPMŰVELTSÉGI VIZSGA
BILINGUAL SCHOOL	KÉTTANNYELVU ISKOLA
CLASS-MASTER	OSZTÁLYFŐNÖK
COLLEGE	FŐISKOLA
COMPULSORY EDUCATION / SCHOOLING	ISKOLAKÖTELEZETTSÉG
DAY-CARE SERVICE TEACHER	NAPKÖZIS TANÁR
EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICE	NEVELÉSI TANÁCSADÓ
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME	KÉPZÉSI PROGRAM
GENERAL EDUCATION	ÁLTALÁNOS KÉPZÉS
GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOL	GIMNÁZIUM
HEADMASTER / SCHOOL DIRECTOR	ISKOLAIGAZGATÓ
HIGHER EDUCATION	FELSŐOKTATÁS
IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS	TANÁR-TOVÁBBKÉPZÉS
LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION	ALSÓ TAGOZATOS OKTATÁS
MEMBER SCHOOL	TAGISKOLA
MIXED SECONDARY SCHOOL	VEGYES KÖZÉPISKOLA (GIMNÁZIUM ÉS SZAKKÖZÉPISKOLA)
NAT/NCC CULTURAL DOMAIN	NAT MŰVELTSÉGI TERÜLET
NATIONAL EXPERT LIST	ORSZÁGOS SZAKÉRTŐI NÉVJEGYZÉK
NATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL-LEAVING EXAMINATION	ÉRETTSÉGI VIZSGAKÖVETELMÉNYEK
NATIONAL TRAINING REGISTER	ORSZÁGOS KÉPZÉSI JEGYZÉK
NORMATIVE SUPPORT	TANULÓI NORMATÍVA
NURSERY SCHOOL	ÓVODA
POST-PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION	(PEDAGÓGUS) SZAKVIZSGA
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION / TRAINING	POSZTSZEKUNDER OKTATÁS / KÉPZÉS
PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION	ÓVODÁZTATÁS
PRIMARY SCHOOL	ÁLTALÁNOS ISKOLA
PRIMARY EDUCATION	ÁLTALÁNOS ISKOLAI OKTATÁS

English	Hungarian
SCHOOL-BASED ADULT EDUCATION	ISKOLARENDSZERŰ FELNŐTTOKTATÁS
SCHOOL-MANAGEMENT TRAINING	ISKOLAVEZETŐ-KÉPZÉS
SECONDARY EDUCATION	KÖZÉPFOKÚ OKTATÁS
SECONDARY SCHOOL	KÖZÉPISKOLA
SECONDARY SCHOOL-LEAVING CERTIFICATE	ÉRETTSÉGI BIZONYÍTVÁNY
SECONDARY SCHOOL-LEAVING EXAMINATION	ÉRETTSÉGI VIZSGA
SECONDARY SCHOOL-LEAVING EXAMINATION REGULATIONS	ÉRETTSÉGI VIZSGASZABÁLYZAT
SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	SZAKKÖZÉPISKOLA
SHORT VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL	SZAKISKOLA
SPECIAL SCHOOL / SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTION	SPECIÁLIS ISKOLA
SPECIAL SHORT VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL	SPECIÁLIS SZAKISKOLA
STUDENT DORMITORY	KOLLÉGIUM
TEACHER'S TRAINING COLLEGE	TANÁRKÉPZŐ FŐISKOLA
TECHNICAL SCHOOL	SZAKISKOLA (SZAKMUNKÁSKÉPZŐ, SZAKISKOLA)
TEXTBOOK	TANKÖNYV
UNIVERSITY	EGYETEM
UPPER PRIMARY EDUCATION	FELSŐ TAGOZATOS OKTATÁS
VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE	SZAKKÉPESÍTÉS
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION / TRAINING	SZAKKÉPZÉS
VOCATIONAL EXAMINATION	SZAKMAI VIZSGA
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL / INSTITUTION	SZAKKÉPZŐ INTÉZMÉNY
VOCATIONAL TRAINING / SKILLED-WORKER TRAINING	SZAKMUNKÁSKÉPZÉS
VOCATIONAL TRAINING FUND (VET FUND)	SZAKKÉPZÉSI ALAP
VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL	SZAKMUNKÁSKÉPZŐ ISKOLA